WORDS IN ACTION

The Teaching of the Mother Tongue for the Training of Citizens in a Democracy

By

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With words we govern men.
DISRAELI.

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TO MY WIFE

MABEL HARTOG

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[1] Reprinted from *The Writing of English.*

PREFACE

I HAVE called this book *Words in Action.* What do I mean by that? Words written with a definite purpose and designed to achieve that purpose. I shall refer later to the relations of written with spoken language, but my main subject is the teaching of writing, not of speaking.

Action, in the critical years of national danger, has suggested first of all the action of fighting forces on the land, on the sea, in the air; guns and ships and aeroplanes, torpedoes and bombs, and the other instruments of war. But it suggested more than that—and it still suggests—the equipment, moral, intellectual, material, social, which we now require, after the war, for a peaceful and happy world.

More and more has the word 'planning' come into public view; and the term 'integration,' within the last few years became suddenly and strangely conspicuous on the pages of books and newspapers and in Parliament. But planning, whatever else it implies, implies the use of words. And words in the service of planning may fitly be called words in action. To create the organization and instruments of peace, we have to think ahead; and thinking ahead, if it is to be effective, demands the use of words, often aided by the imagination and technical devices of the engineer, of the architect and the surveyor, of the mathematician and the statistician; but these would be futile without purposeful, clear, and effective thinking translated into purposeful, clear, and effective words.

What does the present training in schools for such work yield at the present day? Often nothing but the purposeless meandering served up to us by pupils asked to write, without notice, in the space of an hour, on such subjects as Sugar, Spies, Etiquette, The North Sea, or Beasts of Burden —with no purpose and with no audience in view except the

of unsound propaganda; as a means of making each child realize that he is being brought up not as a member of a crowd, but as an independent, thinking, and active member of a community of free people.(*a*)

I say, unhesitatingly, that the application of the principles which I advocate is of fundamental national importance, and that I believe that it can be achieved by the method which I shall describe. It is not in the spirit of a Paracelsus that I speak, but in that of a modern chemist who states without apology that he has discovered a new method of synthesis or analysis. Moreover, what the method offers to teacher and pupil alike is no easy gift; it offers an ambition and an aim which it will take all their energy to fulfil to the utmost of their individual capacities.

I return for a moment to *The Writing of English*.[1] In the forefront of the preface to that book I put the lessons of order and clarity which may be learnt from French example; but I also explained that the whole presentation of my subject had been modified by the conclusions which I had drawn from my own experiments in the teaching of English working men at Manchester Ruskin Hall, and of English schoolchildren in Manchester schools. Yet many of my most friendly critics, possibly counting among them the authors of the Spens Report,[2] overlooked points on which I laid the greatest stress. Recognizing my partial failure to achieve my purpose, I have reconstructed the book so as to remedy, if possible, the deficiencies of my earlier exposition.[3]

[1] The book was originally published late in 1907 under the title *The Writing of English*, by P. J. Hartog, with the assistance of Mrs. Amy H. Langdon. Mrs. Langdon had devoted a considerable amount of time to the selection and composition of typical exercises; and I wish again to acknowledge my real debt to her in this matter. A second edition of the book was published early in 1908, and it has since been reprinted, but is now out of print.

[2] *Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools* (H.M. Stationery Office, 1938, 3*s*. 6*d*.). See especially the interesting section on English Language and Literature, pp. 218–228.

[3] I may refer the interested reader to passages in the prefaces to the first and second editions of *The Writing of English* which space does not allow me to reproduce here.

of sentences, however refined and acute he may be, and especially the man who polishes not to achieve any larger purpose but for the satisfaction of his own dilettante taste, is not much fitted for the rough-and-tumble of strenuous life in strenuous times. I admit, with Joubert, that to write well one must have not only 'a natural facility but an acquired difficulty.' I admit that, with a larger purpose in view, sentence-polishing has its uses, and, it may be, great uses, in the phrases of a great public man, a Nelson, a Churchill, a Franklin Roosevelt, an Eisenhower, a Montgomery. A single sentence may become of world-importance; but such a sentence is not within the power of beginners. And there is a mystery and a glory of words that cannot be taught.

But that is no reason why we should not teach rationally what can and should be taught to every boy and girl.

I cannot claim ever to have taken classes in the mother tongue, day in, day out, in any school. Almost the whole of my experience with pupils of school-age has been gained by way of experiment in Manchester and elsewhere, for my own satisfaction, in my spare time. My own personal experience in writing was gained in the practical work of my life, long before I made experiments on others, in writing articles for various journals, and the lives of physicists and chemists for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, a work for which Canon Ainger provided the appropriate motto, 'No flowers, by request.' I have always regarded my experience as a contributor of scientific reviews and articles to the *Manchester Guardian* in the days of those three remarkable men, C. P. Scott, W. T. Arnold, and C. E. Montague, as of special value to me.(*c*)

Later I had for many years the hard and ceaseless task of drafting letters and reports as an educational administrator and an educational architect (if the term be not too ambitious) and of training the members of my own staffs to

the subject of education; the Subsidiary Chapters and Appendix, intended specially for teachers; and the End-notes, collected at the end of the book, mainly though not wholly intended for readers specially interested in the problems of language and language teaching. References to End-notes are given, not by numbers but by the symbols (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), (*d*) and (*e*) inserted in the text, with corresponding symbols attached to the actual notes.

The completion of the book has been long delayed by war work. In the troublesome preparation of a typescript subjected to continual alterations I have received devoted and invaluable help from my old friend and colleague, Miss Alice M. Read, and I wish specially to mention the great assistance she has given me in the preparation of the Index. I owe lesser debts to three other friends: Mr. A. I. Ellis, Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, and Dr. Arthur Watson, who verified some difficult references for me, and Miss Gladys Roberts.

My thanks are due to Lady Spring Rice and to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., for permission to reproduce the verse from the late Sir Cecil Spring Rice's *Poems* printed overleaf.

P. J. H.

December, 1945.

CHAPTER I

PRESENT DEFICIENCIES IN THE COMMAND OF THE MOTHER TONGUE IN ENGLAND

1. *Introduction*

1. 'The average English boy cannot write English.' This statement was certainly true in 1907 when it formed the opening sentence of my book on *The Writing of English*. It was supported by a mass of evidence and was uncontested at that time. Is it true now? In spite of all that has been done since 1907, it is too uncomfortably near the truth for us to leave things as they are. As I have pointed out in my Preface, the incapacity is a major one. The business with which I am concerned is not one chiefly of commas and semi-colons, of trivial slips of grammar, of appropriate or inappropriate adverbs and adjectives, of decorative metaphors and similes, important as these may be, but of clear thinking and expression, of foresight and of the capacity for planning and administration. During the early school years this business concerns only relatively small matters, but its importance grows with the age of our pupils. Ultimately it affects the whole policy and action of the country, in war as in peace. The claim is not too high. I shall make it again, and point to what I believe to be practical remedies for our main deficiencies, in the course of the book.

I shall now bring forward evidence of these deficiencies as they have been stated during the last twenty-five years, in official reports and by distinguished witnesses with experience covering a very wide field.

2–12. *References to evidence of deficiencies in the writing of English in statements made by—the 'Newbolt' Committee on the Teaching of English* (1924)*; Lord Eustace Percy, and Mr. J. F. Roxburgh, Headmaster of Stowe School* (1930)*; the*

less skill, less care, and less pride than did the French or the German': and that 'the average Englishman was slightly suspicious of a man who showed skill in the art of expression.'[1]

4. In 1932 a body of Investigators appointed by the Secondary School Examinations Council asked the surprising —and revealing—question '*Should a reasonable command of English be required as a condition of obtaining a certificate* [i.e. at the School Certificate examination]?';[2] and said that they were 'in agreement with those Examining Bodies who take steps of one kind or another . . . to prevent the award of certificates to candidates who can only be classed as illiterate.' It was obvious from the context that certificates had been awarded to candidates in 1931 who, in the opinion of the Investigators, deserved the stigma of 'illiteracy.'[3]

5. In 1934 Lord Hailsham, who became Lord Chancellor in 1928, said, 'When I was at the Bar, not the least lucrative and the least difficult effort was to explain in the Courts, to business men, what they did really mean by the language they used.'[4] In the same year Dr. (now Sir Henry) Tizard, F.R.S., then Rector of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, and later President of Magdalen College, Oxford, in his presidential address to Section L of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, said: 'I suppose there is no gap in his equipment that the average

[1] *Times Educational Supplement*, 27 December, 1930.

[2] The italics are in the original.

[3] *The School Certificate Examination*, being the Report of the Panel of Investigators appointed by the Secondary School Examinations Council to inquire into the eight approved School Certificate Examinations held in the summer of 1931 (H.M. Stationery Office, 1932, 2*s*. 6*d*.), para. 70.

The passage above referred to led to a special inquiry in the course of an investigation carried out by a Sub-Committee of the International Institute Examinations Enquiry Committee, of which the present writer acted as Chairman. See *The Marking of English Essays* (Macmillan, 1941, 3*s*. 6*d*.), chapter v, entitled 'Literacy as a Criterion at the School Certificate Stage.' We came to the unexpected conclusion that 'Literacy' has no meaning sufficiently well-recognized for it to be effectively used in judging the scripts of the candidates at the School Certificate level. The Government Investigators had made no investigation on this point. But if the term they used was vague, the stigma was unmistakable.

[4] See *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 February, 1934.

the Grammar School (and even through the University) without acquiring the capacity to express themselves in English.' [1]

9. In 1942 I was told by a distinguished research chemist in one of our largest industrial organizations that the chief chemist had suggested that tutorial classes in English should be started for some of their chemists, and that he himself found that the possession of an honours degree was no guarantee of ability to write English; and Mr. (now Sir) E. G. Savage, C.B., formerly Senior Chief Inspector of the Board of Education, and now Education Officer of the London County Council, stated in a Memorandum on Day Continuation Schools (p. 6) that in the use of their mother tongue, English boys and girls compared unfavourably with those of many other nations.

10. In 1943, in a broadcast talk, Professor D. L. Savory, M.P., of Belfast, commented on the paucity of the teaching of the mother tongue in English schools as compared with such teaching in the schools of France. In the same year, in a brief but masterly survey of *The Study of Education in England*,[2] Sir Fred Clarke, Professor of Education in the University of London, and now Chairman of the Central Advisory Council for Education in England, speaking of 'the Englishman,' said 'circumstances combine to leave the powers of analysis and orderly exposition, with which he is as well-endowed as other peoples. rusting in comparative disuse.'

Also in 1943, the Government Committee on Secondary Education presided over by Sir Cyril Norwood confirmed the evidence in this matter of the Spens Committee. They wrote:

'There is . . . one criticism to which we would direct special attention. From all quarters, Universities, Professional Bodies, firms and business houses, training colleges

[1] *Secondary Education with special reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools* (being a Report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education) (H.M. Stationery Office, 1938, 3*s.* 6*d.*). See pp. 173–174.

[2] Oxford University Press; see pp. 9–11.

Robertson, then Chairman of the British Council, denounced the 'numberless ill-drafted, ill-considered . . . documents of inordinate length' in reports from the staffs of a Government department which it is unnecessary to specify here. He attributed these defects to the rapidity and frequency of modern communications and to the lamentably extended use of stenography.[1]

The defects to which Sir Malcolm Robertson drew attention conform so closely to the picture drawn by other witnesses with widely different experience that they must be largely due to a common origin and tradition.[2]

11. My last quotation is from an article in *The Times* of 26 October, 1945, headed 'Faulty English in State Documents,' which gives a summary of a speech made on the previous day by Mr. Escott Reid, the Canadian delegate, at a meeting in London of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Preparatory Commission. 'Mr. Reid said that some of the documents were full of crimes against the English language. Great state documents should be written in accordance with the great traditions of the language in simple, sensible, English.'

12. The tradition is illustrated, perhaps at its worst, by the following incident of which I heard from an exceptionally able member of the sixth form of one of our best-known public schools. Their master had been teaching them Shakespeare, and when it was suggested that he hadn't been teaching them any composition he said, 'Well, you've got ten minutes. Write me an essay on happiness.' And he meant it seriously.

13. Conclusion

13. The evidence of our deficiencies is, then, convincing. I now turn to the question of remedies. In England, as in

[1] See the *Sunday Times* of 19 December, 1943. I have omitted some of Sir Malcolm's adjectives.

[2] Want of space prevents me from quoting from a number of articles on the subject, signed and unsigned, in *The Times Educational Supplement* and the *Journal of Education*.

CHAPTER II

FIRST PRINCIPLES[1]

1. Preliminary.—Traditional over-emphasis by teachers on details of style. Early criticisms of the teaching of English by Locke

1. To the English teachers of two or three centuries ago, the art of writing, considered apart from grammar, merely meant the elegances of writing. On this point we may quote the testimony of Locke, who was not only one of the founders of modern philosophy, but a man with a wide and active experience of public affairs, both in England and abroad.[2]

In his *Thoughts concerning Education* of 1693, he says there 'can scarcely be a greater defect in a gentleman [and he had in his mind chiefly the education of the gentry] than not to express himself well either in writing or in speaking.' But yet, he asks his reader 'whether he doth not know a great many who cannot so much as tell a story as they should, much less speak clearly and persuasively in any business.' 'This,' he continues, 'I think not to be so much their fault as the fault of their education. . . . They have been taught Rhetorick but yet never taught how to express themselves handsomely with their tongues or pens in the languages they are always to use: as if the names of the figures that embellished the discourses of those who understood the art of speaking were the very art and skill of speaking well.'[3]

Since the time of Locke, the fashion in figures of speech has changed, and criticism has perhaps become subtler in examination of detail and in the distinction of individual

[1] I have made use in this chapter, not only of *The Writing of English* but of subsequent publications, including a contribution on 'English Composition at the School Certificate Examination' to the *Essays on Examinations* published for the International Institute Examinations Enquiry by Messrs. Macmillan in 1936.

[2] I shall refer later to Locke's views on figures of speech in Chapter IV, below.

[3] R. H. Quick's edition (Camb. Univ. Press), § 189.

altogether different from that of the schoolboy exercise. Cicero in ancient times, Burke in modern, spoke or wrote in dead earnest to bring home a particular conviction to a particular audience; the schoolboy only tries feebly to imitate a Cicero or a Burke; he has no object and no audience in view. To ask a pupil to imitate the results of a great master without providing him with the definite stimulus and aim which made those results possible is indeed to set him to make bricks without straw. And so it has gone on for centuries. Hence the futilities of the rhetoric denounced by Locke, the futilities still living in that ridiculous imitation of great writing, the purposeless school-essay set in almost every English school, asked for at almost every examination in English.

'The question of the teaching of the mother tongue is part of an even wider question; for the whole process of education, intellectual and moral, involves a delicate adjustment of the necessities for acting like others, and for acting differently from others. The unintelligent use of the model is probably the central fault of European education. . . .

'If we have much to learn from France, and something from the United States, Germany, and other countries in this matter, a great and worthy tradition of teaching English to English people must, I think, be ultimately founded on English experience. The problem of the teaching of the mother tongue is indissolubly bound up with questions of social conditions, national temperament, and national requirements.'

The last point had already been emphasized by Sir Michael Sadler. 'We cannot,' he wrote, 'wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home we shall have a living plant. A national system of education is a living thing. . . . It has in it some of the secret workings of

5. Distinction between 'record' and 'message.' This distinction first made by Locke

5. The second principle is really comprehended in the first, but is of great practical importance. It is this: that we must distinguish between two kinds of audience, ourselves and other people. In real life we often write to communicate our thoughts to other people, and anything written for this purpose I shall call a *message*. Anything written for oneself, from an entry in a diary to the soliloquy of a philosopher like Locke, who used to write daily to explore his own thoughts, I shall call a *record*. As I found only recently, the word 'record' was first used in this sense by Locke.(a) Nothing is more useful in teaching one's pupils how to write than to set before them, as soon as possible, this distinction between record and message.[1]

6. The question of 'success' and 'failure'

6. The third principle follows naturally from the other two. It is that when we have written any kind of composition other than a senseless meandering, any *directed* composition of which we have defined either explicitly, or in our own minds, the audience for whom, and the object with which, we have written, we should ask ourselves whether we think that we have hit our mark, or missed—whether we have *succeeded* or *failed*. A definite answer is sometimes possible, sometimes not. And, if we have not hit our mark, we may have to ask ourselves how near we have been to it; in other words, *how far* we have succeeded or failed.

[1] I first used this nomenclature in *Record or Message*, an address to a meeting of the Workers' Educational Association at the University of London in 1913. It was published under the title *Record or Message* (Oxford Univ. Press) but is out of print.

I quote here (with the permission of H.M. Stationery Office) a passage from the excellent *Notes for New Entrants* (S. Gen. 847 F/2, Feb. 1943) by Sir Alexander Maxwell and Sir Harold Scott of the Home Office and Ministry of National Security: 'The object of a letter is either to notify a decision or to state an argument. *In either case it is directed to a person. Put yourself in that person's place and try to visualize the effect of your letter on him.*' (The italics are mine.) The 'Notes' may be a first step towards the abandonment of 'officialese.'

wards the end of *Prometheus Unbound*, speaks of the harmonious rule of 'thoughts and forms' by language:

> Language is a perpetual Orphic song,
> Which rules with Daedal harmony a throng,
> Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were. (*b*)

9. The undirected 'splashing about' of first efforts. Its development into directed expression

9. It is with the most modest of 'records' that children begin to write, and to substitute words and sentences for their undeveloped soliloquies on the simplest of subjects. Their first continuous efforts at this stage may be roughly likened to those of beginners who have been encouraged to 'splash about' in the water before they begin to swim, so as to get the 'feel' of the water, and of the kind of resistance which it offers. I give below, as an example of such 'splashing about,' the composition of a boy of 10 on 'A Squirrel':

> I am a squirrel. I live in a tree. I saw a nut on the ground so I got down the tree and picked it up, and ate it, and ran up the tree again. Next morning I got down the tree to hunt round for some more nuts, when one fell from a tree beside me. I picked it up and held it in my paw, and found another nut, until I got a lot of them and went up the tree again.

We may be satisfied at first if our pupils in their compositions are able just to keep afloat by splashing about, if I may continue to use my metaphor, without swimming in any particular direction. But before long, if we guide them aright, they will learn to swim from one point to another, and later to determine their own aim and direction. If a child of 10 or 11 is taught reasonably well how to write English sentences on a given subject by splashing about, he will, if wisely guided, soon learn to write for a definite audience, and with a definite object in view—to use in a simple way the same kind of technique that he will need in

The schoolboy 'essay' has found its defenders. In my view the very form and ease of the essay by a Steele or a Johnson, a Hazlitt or a Lamb, imply a knowledge of life and an authority to which the schoolboy cannot pretend. Admirable as literature, as models for schoolboy imitation such essays are useless and worse than useless. It is a matter of common experience that the youth trained in 'essay-writing' after our traditional fashion not only quotes his facts without acknowledgment or criticism of their sources, but too often loses all sense of *meum* and *tuum* in matters of opinion. It is facility of style that becomes his chief aim; and since he writes on subjects beyond his powers he is led almost inevitably, and in spite of the precepts of his teachers, to value ease above honesty.

The apparently absurd procedure adopted at present in our schools and examination rooms has an historic origin and a philosophic basis.[1] The object in the mind of the teacher in teaching his pupils how to write is not to teach them how to write for themselves. It is not to teach them self-expression, but to imitate a model. The boy was to become what R. L. Stevenson later called 'a sedulous ape' of great writers, and the models of the great writers which he had to take were mostly their essays—the essays of the writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[2] Did not the great Dr. Johnson himself define the essay as 'a loose sally of the mind,' 'an ill-digested piece,' and was it not therefore obvious that the English schoolboy could not do better in writing an essay than to live up to the standard of Dr. Johnson and to write 'loose sallies' and 'ill-digested pieces' on Gossip, or Flowers, or Trees, or The Good Old Times?

The fact is that our English teachers have taken a superficial view of what imitation should mean. They have tried

[1] I have briefly traced its origins from classical times, in England and in France, in *The Writing of English*, chap. ii, pp. 7–28, with references to my authorities, and in Chapter X, below.

[2] I deal with the use of the model more fully in Chapter X, §§ 20–22.

own 'imperfect intellect' as 'content with fragments scattered pieces of truth' with a light 'not steady and polar but mutable and shifting: waxing and again waning.'

I venture to suggest that we may all read and love the essays of these charming writers, but that it is something worse than folly to ask schoolboy pupils and examinees of the twentieth century to imitate them.

The schoolboy, in writing, should have an audience in mind, but it must be a very different audience from the literary and political public of the days of Queen Anne or of the Georges, whom by no force of the imagination can he conjure up. The schoolboy should have an object in writing, but Heaven forbid that he should try, like a Steele or a Johnson, to reform his age.[1]

And could anything be more ludicrous than to ask him to be learned and spontaneous, unsystematic and charming, to flit from flower to flower, after the fashion of a Goldsmith or a Lamb? Yet I cannot but think that those examiners who ask schoolboys and schoolgirls to write essays on Gardens, Trees, and Gossip, have in their minds some vague idea of what a Goldsmith or a Lamb might have written on the subject.

Dr. Cloudesley Brereton once quoted a saying of Sir John Gorst—'He who thinks in an examination is lost.' But ought not candidates writing an essay to have time to think, to revise, and to make a plan, either written before they have made their essay or after, as a test of construction? It would cause amazement to the teachers of France—a country which excels in clearness of exposition—if they were told that any teacher of composition could regard the plan as a pedantic superfluity. Is it not an essential element in the presentation of a subject to an unseen audience when the

[1] Professor G. M. Trevelyan in his book on *England under Queen Anne*, vol. iii, 'The Peace and the Protestant Succession' (1934), p. 23, writes of the *Tatler* as follows: 'Its influence, and that of the *Spectator* which grew out of it in two years' time, did more to launch Eighteenth Century civilization on its characteristic course than all the blood shed at Malplaquet.'

admirable; others, at intervals, should be selected as failures, of which pupil and teacher alike may perceive the defects. But they must all be considered as examples on which our pupils should be asked to exercise their individual judgments, either in class, or after reflection at home, before the teacher states his own views. And the first-rate teacher will not be unduly surprised, nor take it amiss, if he finds that the judgments of some members of his class please him better than his own first impressions, especially when the pupils constitute the kind of audience for whom the description has been written. Some of us, pupils and teachers alike, are born literary rebels, and when we are instructed by fastidious critics to admire, we tend, however unreasonably, to reject. It may be, not the judgment of the critic, but his assumption of infallibility that offends.

At a time when copies of newspapers were available in large numbers, and at a low price (as I hope they may be again), I found it extremely useful to ask the members of my class of working men to compare articles on the same topic in different newspapers written for different classes of readers, each with its own special background of knowledge and interests. Such articles afforded familiar and striking illustrations of the adjustments of skilled professional writers to the demands of their task.

13. *The planning of a composition*

13. I referred in § 11 above to another principle of method of which the necessity, long recognized in French schools and in German schools, has been singularly neglected in the great majority of our own. It is obvious that if we are not only to make our meaning clear to our readers, but to make it clear as quickly as possible, it is not sufficient that each individual sentence should be clear: our composition from beginning to end must be so *planned* that the reader shall get a grasp of the whole as well as of the details. When I suggested not long since to the headmaster of one of our great

15. Method of training the judgment of individual pupils and of the class as a whole. The author to be regarded, after discussion in class, as the final judge of his own work

15. I return to the class-room and come to another principle in the training of our pupils which I regard as of even more vital importance than insistence on the plan. I suggest that it should be made an essential part of that training that the pupils should be required not only to write on subjects of which they know less, but also on subjects of which they know more, than the teacher, and on which they have the right to *an opinion of their own*.

Further, they should be not infrequently asked to write with an object and for an audience of their own choice, not prescribed by the teacher. And, revolutionary as it may seem, I suggest that, in dealing with such work, we must ask each pupil after careful consideration, with the aid of comments by both the class and the teacher, to regard himself, the author, as the *final judge of his own work*, whatever the opinions that may have been expressed by others, except in one respect to which I now come. The pupil must not regard this as a light matter, to be decided merely by a whim or a personal preference which he could not justify, at any rate to himself, on reflection. It is a sound principle to ask him in class for his own opinion on the points which the teacher thinks worth raising before asking for the opinion of his comrades. The young author will sometimes be more severe than his comrades or his teacher in criticizing his own work. And there is this question which he must always be asked to put to himself, generally at the end of the discussion —'Have I failed or succeeded [or, perhaps, How far have I failed or succeeded] in writing with the particular object and for the particular audience which I had in view: those which were defined for me, or which I defined for myself, before I began to write?'

If the class has been chosen as the audience, they may be

discussion with the author and the class, I said to the author, 'Do you think that your story was a success or a failure?' After a moment or two of silent reflection, he replied, 'I really don't know.' 'Well,' I said, 'it is easy to put the matter to the test. You have defined as the object of your story to mystify and to amuse.' (It was as a matter of fact an ingenious thriller.) I continued: 'You have defined as your audience the class itself. Here it is.' I turned to the class: 'Hands up, those who were mystified by Smith's story.' All hands were held up. 'Now hands up, those who were amused by Smith's story.' No hands were held up. I looked at Smith. 'You see you have been successful in one of your two objects, but not in the other.'[1] The larger audience of teachers, and I myself, laughed, but I do not think that the author's feelings were in the least hurt.

17. *The immediate 'failure' or 'success' of a composition not the sole criterion by which it is to be judged*

17. The good teacher will naturally realize that the success or failure of a pupil's composition as a whole to achieve its immediate purpose is not the sole criterion by which it is to be judged. Some failures are more promising for the future than other successes. Many points of significance will arise in the course of the discussion; and especially is it necessary to accustom all present to challenge, mentally or aloud, throughout the lesson, the reality, the sincerity, and the consistency of descriptions and arguments presented in each composition read to the class. I will take a simple example of inconsistency in a prize story once shown at an international educational exhibition. The author in describing a landscape made it lurid in the setting sun at the top of his page, while the dewdrops on the grass were simultaneously silvered by the moonlight at the bottom of the page. If I were asked to describe the judgment of the teacher who selected such a composition for public exhibition,

[1] The story is printed at the end of this chapter.

might be a help if the teacher, at a convenient opportunity, said something of this kind, 'If any one of you wants to be proud of his intellectual powers, let him be specially proud of his power to say straight off, "I don't know," when he doesn't know.'

The pupils would be greatly helped in this matter if the teacher insisted on their giving references to the sources from which any special knowledge displayed in their compositions has been derived, by means of foot-notes or otherwise.

It is not always easy even for grown-up writers to steer clear of such insincerities. Each of us must bear in mind the question which the great Montaigne prefaced to his *Essais*—*Que sçais-je?*

20. *The combination of creation with self-criticism the most powerful stimulus of the intellectual conscience. Its exercise necessary for a true democracy*

20. It is the combination of creation and self-criticism in the young writer that, in my view, is the most powerful stimulus to what I have called the intellectual conscience. We all of us realize that the moral conscience only comes into action when the child or adolescent has freedom to act. The same holds good of the intellectual conscience. Precepts may come from other people; the examples, to be really effective, must come from the inside.

And the intellectual conscience, once awakened, will not be limited to criticism of the writer's own work. The pupil will have learned not to be slow in his judgment of the work of others, and his alertness and activity of mind will extend quickly from the work of his comrades to the films that he sees, the broadcasts to which he listens, and the books and newspapers that he reads.

Once more, I repeat, the false magic of print will have vanished. His mind and his imagination of real things will have been stirred into a new activity. He will have acquired what I regard as the only effective safeguard against unsound propaganda, whether invented at home or im-

and that we ourselves, as well as others, criticize these creations. Moreover, even in the school-learning of the old-fashioned type, the quickest way into the minds of many pupils may be through the achievements of their hands. 'The hand, the ear, the eye, be the greatest instruments whereby the receiving and delivering of our learning is chiefly executed,' wrote Richard Mulcaster, a remarkable pioneer of education in the sixteenth century.[1] Mulcaster's perception of this truth was only partial, though it was wider than the quotation implies.

The relation of the teaching of language to the teaching of other subjects is too vast a matter for me to deal with here except in the barest outline, but it is one that the teacher of the mother tongue must bear in mind. This is not the place to deal with the importance of craftsmanship and of the fine arts in their widest sense, not as accessories but as essential elements in education as a whole.(*a*) But I suggest that the analysis of the technique of teaching the mother tongue given above also applies in large measure to the technique of education in these other activities of life.

In the fashioning of material things in all their variety, in the fashioning of musical sounds, in the fashioning of the movements of the human body, there are two kinds of object in view, sometimes separated by an indefinite boundary line, sometimes plainly overlapping: fashioning for 'use' and fashioning for 'beauty.' And, in default of something better, I venture here to extend the term 'audience' so as again to signify the persons we have in mind when we create; and we may again distinguish between what we create to satisfy ourselves alone, and what we create to satisfy other people. We have once more to consider the question of 'record' and 'message'; and once more to regard the work our pupils learn to accomplish as a means of self-stimulus, of self-

[1] An account of Mulcaster is given in R. H. Quick's *Essays on Educational Reformers*. Mulcaster (1530?–1611) was the first headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School, and later High Master of St. Paul's. The text of one of his books, *Positions*, has been reprinted (by Quick) but not that of his *Elementarie*.

passed quickly in the theme of thought, I remembered having been told that this old manor was haunted long before I had come here to live with my aunt and cousins.

Slowly, I got out of bed, it was still moving in the far corner of the room; I crept closer and slowly it began to move to the door and as it moved I could see that it was a resemblance of a human form draped and vested in white. Could it be a ghost?

It passed through the door, and putting on a heavy black coat I followed it on tiptoe; it almost stumbled on the stairs, and I could clearly see that it did not suspect that I was following it, slowly it passed down the passage, and reaching the front door it pulled back the creaking bolts and passed out into the darkness of the night. Slipping into the kitchen, I put on a pair of slippers, and came back to the door; the ghost was well out of sight, slowly I went down the path at the bottom of which was a shrubbery with a path all round it; walking on I was surprised to find that the ghost was coming towards me. I crept on, and at last when only 3 yards away from it, it saw me, and turning, hurried off in the opposite direction. I went back to the house, but only to find the door locked.

Happily I found an open window, and climbing a water pipe, I got indoors, and went back to bed.

Next morning over the breakfast table, my cousin told us how he had acted ghost, and gone into my room, [how] thinking I had seen him he went into the garden, and how he met a *real* ghost near the shrubbery. I said nothing about my experiences, and he still thinks he saw a ghost, and he has never played at ghost tricks since.

The facts from which I start
to whom I was teaching chemical analysis
and also some of the more difficult parts of the
of chemical theory, showed incapacity of expression
of two kinds, which, from the educational and philosophic
point of view, it is of real importance to distinguish
clearly.

In the first place, I found many students (and my experience is the common one) incapable of putting down on paper for the information of another person, or for their own use when once forgetfulness had set in, an intelligible record of the experiments by which they had succeeded in solving, it might be, a fairly complex problem in chemical analysis. In such cases I was able to assure myself that incapacity of expression did not necessarily imply incapacity of thought. Max Müller says, in his book on *The Science of Thought*, that we cannot think without words.[1] If he were right, the problem of training in the mother tongue and the problem of thought-training would be identical. But I feel convinced that his view is an exaggerated one. The fact that an illiterate mechanic has before now devised elaborate machinery which he would have been totally incapable of describing in words (though possibly not without some ill-defined form of mental symbol) appears to ruin Max Müller's generalization.(*a*) The case of my own students, successful in analysis (and they were no mere rule-of-thumb workers), but incapable of describing in words their successful reasoning in images or things, is no less to the point. Nor could one deny to the great painter, sculptor, or musician, the faculty of being able to think out, without words, a great work.

There is, again, a world of things real, but intangible, an essential part of the social, emotional, and religious life, that words at most suggest and that they cannot represent, but of

[1] F. Max Müller, *The Science of Thought* (Longmans & Co., 1887). See p. 549 and

3. The problem of teaching the mother tongue a different one from that of teaching a foreign language

3. It is evident that the problem of the teaching of English to English children is a much wider and more complex problem, and at the same time a more fundamental problem, than the teaching of French, or German, or Latin, or Greek; although the distinction is often concealed by our easy use of the general term 'language-teaching.' It is the more necessary to point this out because our methods of teaching English are largely based on the ancient methods of the schoolmaster devised for the teaching of foreign languages, and this, oddly enough, at a time [1907] when we have begun to re-discover that the best method of teaching the elements of those languages is to imitate the natural methods of learning the mother tongue.

It is only the absurdities of present practice that justify the reminder here, that while the majority of English boys will not at any stage be able to think freely in a foreign language, the average boy of ten or eleven has already a considerable vocabulary and mastery of the mother tongue, in speech, if not in writing; and that, though he may be totally ignorant of the rules of grammar, he has in general the power of saying accurately *what he needs and wants to say* in the language in which he thinks. He is quite capable, at that age, of beginning, with a little help, to explore and develop and stimulate his own thought by observation and reflection, and by setting down the record of that observation and reflection in his mother tongue; he has the free play of a very large part of his mental faculties. In the study of a foreign language he applies those faculties over a very limited range; for the problems of linguistics, whatever value we may attach to them, form, after all, only a small portion of the general problems that present themselves, or that ought to be presented, to the mind of a child. Schoolmasters speak of the disciplinary value of the classics. They are apt to forget that our teaching of Latin comes from a time when Latin

further, to leave for the moment this purely theoretical exposition in order to describe the results of certain experiments in the teaching of composition which I made in the sessions of 1901–2 and 1902–3 with a class of working men at Ruskin Hall, Manchester, and in the latter session with a mixed class of boys and girls of from ten to thirteen in the Practising School of the Owens College (now the University of Manchester), of which Miss Catherine Dodd was the organizer and head.

6. I begin with what was, in fact, my first lesson in the Practising School. I face my class. 'I am going to tell you a story which I want you to tell me again, not as I tell it to you, but in a particular way. This is my story:

'A boy gets up late, hurries over his breakfast, runs off to school, and on the way drops his reading book into the mud. The wheel of a cart goes over the book and spoils it. When the boy reaches school, the master asks him why he is late. He replies. The master then asks him for his reading book, and he tells the whole truth. The master tells him that his parents must buy him another book. The boy is sorry, as his parents are poor and cannot well afford it.'

'Now,' I say to my class, 'I want you to tell that story over again in a particular way, as if you were telling it to a little brother so as to make him realize that, after all, it is as well not to be late for school. First of all, do you think your brother would listen to you if you just repeated the story in the way I have told it? Is the story interesting or dull?' I tried this story with five classes, comprising altogether about a hundred children.[1] The almost invariable answer (and the one I desired) was 'Dull.' In one class opinions were equally divided, and the headmistress told me, after a show of hands, that the clever children voted for 'Dull' and the others for 'Interesting.'

'Yes,' I continue, 'it is a dull story. Your brother wouldn't

[1] I was allowed for this purpose to use four secondary schools, besides the Practising School of the Owens College.

7. The first lesson, as I have described it, occupies not more than from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour. It is followed a week later by a criticism lesson. It was only after considerable trial with my adult class at Ruskin Hall that I found what seems to me the most satisfactory form of this lesson. The criticism lesson may, at a pinch, when one is experienced, be improvised; but to get the best results the exercises should be handed in a day before the lesson, and the teacher should read them through carefully, choosing seven or eight typical ones to deal with in class. On the rest only the briefest of written comments should be made. I believe, with others, that there is no more shocking and exhausting waste of a master's or mistress's time than that devoted to detailed corrections not dealt with in class. But that is a question to be treated apart.[1]

I have, then, determined the general character of the lesson (though with a mind ready to change under the stimulus of events), and face my class once more.

I now ask the author of one of the selected exercises to stand up and explain exactly and fully what it was he was asked to do. Bobby Smith stands up and looks over his shoulder at the rest of the class to see what they think of this unusual procedure. I make Smith keep his eyes right, and speak up like a man. He knows exactly what he has to say, and can say it with a little encouragement, just as well as the French boy, or the German boy, or the American boy. Self-consciousness in speech disappears astonishingly quickly when a boy or girl really has something connected to say, and when you make it plain that this isn't 'showing off,' but part of the every-day business of school work.

I next read Bobby Smith's composition aloud, and as well as I can. I especially want to direct Smith's attention and the attention of the class, not to small faults, but to the

[1] Cf. J. Payot, *Revue Universitaire* for June, 1897, p. 19; July, 1897, pp. 146 sqq.; and January, 1898; pp. 15 sqq. See also references to Payot in Chapter X, §§ 21, 22, below.

a hint as to which, and ask for opinions on it all round before giving my own. Excellent criticisms will often be volunteered. Let me give an example.

8. In one of the stories the boy was called, not by his mother, but by 'one of the maids.' Objection was at once taken to this on the ground that if the parents could ill afford to buy a new reading book they would not be able to keep servants.

Again, many of the stories began 'It was a bright, sunny morning.' In almost every class one child or another objected to this on the ground that if the roads were muddy it had probably been raining, and the day was likely to be a dull one. Here is an example written by one of these objectors.

Lazy Dick

It was a dull and damp morning. The previous night it had been raining and it was not yet dry, as Richard Greenwood was awakened by his mother's call, 'Dick, my boy, do be quick, or you will be late for school.' 'All right, mother,' replied Dick; for he was not a bad boy, only he was lazy. After a time he turned over and thought no more of his promise. In about twenty minutes' time he again heard his mother's voice: 'How long are you going to be?' said she, 'your breakfast is ready.' Now Dick's mother, Widow Greenwood, was poor; her husband had died when Richard was quite little, and she had spoilt him in consequence, as he was the only child. Richard jumped up and dressed, but when he got downstairs he was too late to have any breakfast.

He laced up his boots, and in his hurry broke the lace. 'Oh! what a bother,' he exclaimed as he ran to the drawer for another.

It was not long before he was in the street, slate and book in hand. As he crossed the road, in his haste he dropped his reading book, and, before he had time to run back and pick it up, Mr. Hunt, the milkman, turned the corner with his cart, the muddy wheels of which completely spoilt Dick's book, for it was in the country and the roads were wet.

dressed and went down and opened the door. He saw his father and mother, and when they got inside the house his mother asked him what he had been doing all the time and why he did not open the door sooner. Tom said, 'I just got up.' His mother was very angry and gave him a good thrashing. But Tom did not take any notice of that, and continued to be lazy till he died.

The girls in the class were much shocked at a story so immoral, or non-moral, as you please, but Constantine explained that he knew many lazy men who must have been lazy boys, and had grown up to be lazy men in spite of being 'whacked,' and his particular story was about a boy of that kind. I am bound to say that I myself took Constantine's side. I maintained his perfect right to describe any kind of boy he liked, though I hinted that laziness did not generally lead to happiness. On the same occasion a boy of eleven who had been singularly tongue-tied, and capable at first of writing only a few lines, gave me a long and somewhat romantic story—his own invention—of a boy who stopped a pair of galloping horses which he saw fifty yards ahead of him, and which he caught up and finally arrested with a leap of ten yards.[1] The story itself showed a capacity for continuous mental effort and attention which I should not have suspected, and I was particularly interested, because I am convinced that no amount of individual teaching from myself would have done for the boy what the class had done for him in ten weeks. The class, however, tried to undo its good work by scoffing at the absurdities of the composition, and it is in a case of this kind that the teacher has, perhaps most of all, to play an active part instead of merely prompting. He must see that the criticism which soon becomes acute shall never become unkind. In this work the minds and souls of the children are, as it were, naked. We must take care that they are unashamed.

[1] For text, see Appendix II, p. 228, below.

Facing the West

'Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.'

Facing the west is the title I have given to a picture. The picture shows a man leading a white horse. Over its back is a coat, and by its side hang the unused stirrups. The man has evidently been riding, but is now leading his horse to the blacksmith's shop, for in his hand he is carrying a horse-shoe, which the horse has cast. They have their backs to us. The man is wearing a blue coat and brown trousers, he has also a wide-awake hat. His red tie is being blown by the evening breeze. The two are making their way over a moor. At the back of the picture is the sinking sun, which is a great contrast to the green moorland. In the foreground of the picture is a pond which the man has crossed by stepping-stones, bringing the horse with him.

At the right-hand corner of the picture grow the reeds and rushes. Among these four wild ducks enjoy the summer evening. The reflection of the horse may be seen in the water. In the far distance there is a clump of trees on the horizon and a pathway leaning to them. By this way the two are travelling.

In spite of minor faults, the writer has, I venture to think, succeeded in her task. The title, 'Facing the West,' seems to me an exceedingly happy piece of compression, and the end again is skilful in conveying the main feature of the picture. If anyone tries his hand at describing a picture graphically he will find the task none too easy. It is, of course, in some ways easier to describe a picture than a scene of everyday life, for the artist has already selected, from the infinity of details to be found in Nature, the features which he regards as essential, and so simplified the problem of verbal statement. On the other hand, precisely because the scene is not an everyday scene, the expression in words of the feeling which it conveys is a matter of fresh difficulty.

12. The description, like the story, is capable of unlimited variation. You may well pass from the artistic to the

dogmatize in this matter on an insufficient basis of knowledge. He will flounder and become ridiculous. It is better to try to work out these questions *with* the class, and with a perfect readiness to accept suggestions from whatever quarter they come. Such questions, even if not dealt with in separate lessons, are, indeed, bound to occur incidentally in the course of the ordinary composition lessons. A child uses a word like 'quaint.' You at once challenge him and ask exactly what he means by it. Or he will say that the sea is 'still and calm.' Is this mere reduplication or not?—and so on. The inexperienced teacher may perhaps be warned that within recent years the problem of the development of word-meanings has received considerable attention from linguists like Darmesteter, Bréal, and others; and that writers on 'semantics,' as the new science is called, are safer guides than writers on 'style' with a partiality for archaisms.[1]

14. Possible objections to the methods of teaching described

14. I anticipate two objections that may be made by the experienced teacher to the method I have described.

Firstly, since this is a training of individuals—and out of the exercises sent in by a class of twenty or twenty-five (which is a reasonable maximum), only seven or eight can be dealt with in the hour—will not the majority of the class be disappointed at having their exercises passed over, and lose interest? The answer to that is twofold.

(i) Many criticisms of the exercises read will apply to those not read, and will be taken to heart by the pupils concerned.

(ii) Each of the pupils knows that his turn will come, and realizes that to read the exercises of each member of the class at every lesson is impossible. He learns to feel that the work is worth doing for its own sake, not to please the teacher or to get marks. As a matter of fact I never gave marks at all,

[1] See End-note (*a*) to Chapter IV, § 2, below.

must be of the gentlest and most tactful kind. It is the training of the growing plant that is your business, not the hammering of a piece of metal with a sledge-hammer. If the child says, 'I think this,' your limit of objection must be to say, 'Very well, I don't agree,' not 'You are wrong.' It is obvious that this restriction does not apply to matters of fact, or grammar, etc.; but even in dealing with these, I am clear that it is well to avoid an undue severity that would simply tend to crush the initiative you wish to stimulate. *Experto crede.* Teaching of this kind is a wonderful training of the teacher in humility, and in a kind of humility which I think he will not regret in the end. He will acquire a knowledge of the workings of the child-mind hardly to be got in any other way.

16. Summary of the chief points in the exercises previously described

16. Before passing on to exercises of a different kind, we may now sum up the chief points in the synthetic exercises in the mother tongue according to the method of teaching described above.

(1) You find that the average English child of from ten to thirteen can speak easily, forcibly, correctly, *when he wants to say something.* In order to develop his power of speaking and writing easily, forcibly, and correctly, you make him want to say something.

(2) You make him want to say something of his own, something that he feels to be, and that is, worth saying, something on which he has a right to have an opinion. He is not repeating to you what you know already. He is observing external nature and his own sensations and recording his observations, and so doing in a modest way 'original work.'

(3) In writing he is not merely writing vaguely, as our schoolboys at present write essays on lofty themes for the world in general; he is writing for a particular audience and with a particular object in view.

a place, and a large place, in education; its place has been hitherto, I believe, too large a one in English education for individual efficiency. In this particular work it is the child's own judgment that must be made supreme. His original effort to produce is to be controlled and guided by self-criticism. The aim of the teacher is to cultivate what I will call the *intellectual conscience.*

17. The same spirit that inspires our methods in teaching our pupils how to write should inspire our teaching of them how to read. Criticism of the microscopic methods often directed to the study of archaisms or unusual expressions in great writers

17. The same spirit that inspires our methods in teaching children how to write must inspire us in teaching them how to read.

At present the microscopic method employed, and necessarily employed at first, in making out the meaning of Cicero or Homer, is employed with no less zest in English schools in the study of English authors whose general meaning is plain. The obvious resource of the microscopic method when applied to our own authors is to study archaisms or abnormalities, and thus it is often for his difficulty rather than his greatness that Shakespeare is used as a school book. Place before a teacher, used to working with the excessively annotated editions of our poet, a passage of Swift, or Macaulay, or Huxley, or John Morley, and the chances are ten to one, if it contains no unusual expressions, no obsolete words to comment on, that he will have nothing to say upon it to his class.

Now, I take it that just as in writing so in reading it is the sense that matters most. If, in a passage of a great author, obsolete expressions occur, these must no doubt be explained in order to render the understanding of the text perfect. But the philological interest of an author ought to be for schoolboys and schoolgirls a purely secondary one. The greatness and the importance of a writer (one is almost

ear. In order to put my class at Ruskin Hall[1] on the alert for analysis of sense, and as a preliminary exercise, I read to them an essay on Energy, from a collection of *Civil Service Essays*. The sentences were beautifully balanced, and I tried to do them justice. I then asked each member of the class in turn what he thought of the essay, and all, except one, were agreed that it was 'very fine.' Why? 'Because it sounded so well.' The exceptional pupil said 'he didn't see much in it,' and I concurred. It was then the turn of the class to cross-examine, and for me to justify myself; and we decided to analyse one or two of the passages together. Here is one: 'What serious-minded man ever travels in a railway carriage without reflecting on the energy of a Watt or a Stephenson?' The author obviously intends us to reply—None. Yet he knows perfectly well that hundreds and thousands of well-informed and serious-minded season-ticket holders travel by train every day without thinking about the energy of either Watt or Stephenson. That one lesson put the class extraordinarily on their mettle. The story is a sufficiently old one, but no one who has not seen for himself the effect of wind-bag orators on half-educated audiences can realize how important is teaching of this kind.

I began subsequent lessons by reading other passages for the judgment of my students, sometimes from a great author, sometimes from an inferior one, but always keeping back my own view, so far as possible, until that of the class had been fully expressed. The exercise is no less well suited for boys and girls from the age of fourteen or fifteen than for adult pupils.

20–22. The rational use of the précis or summary. Its value in teaching pupils how to distinguish essentials from non-essentials

20. The next step in the systematic study of an author is best made in writing; and I applied the method of *précis*

[1] Since incorporated in the Manchester University Settlement, Ancoats.

statement of what the pupil regards as the main points in the original passage for the benefit of a person who has not the time or opportunity to read that passage for himself. I suggest that 1,000 words should be regarded as a minimum length for the passage to be summarized.

21. In this kind of work the pupil learns quickly to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. Thus the mention of the 'velvet cushions' of the House of Lords in the summary of the trial scene of 'Warren Hastings' promptly moved my class to laughter, as being entirely unessential to the main facts of the case. (The 'velvet cushions' might, of course, have been mentioned to suggest some particular train of thought, but this is not so in Macaulay's essay.)

22. The first aim of the exercise is obviously to reveal the plan, conscious or unconscious, of the author. On one occasion my class, who were, it so happened, nearly all Radicals, had, they told me, listened with great delight to the speech of a distinguished Liberal leader [the late Lord Morley of Blackburn], and I suggested to them to summarize the first two columns of his speech as reported in the *Manchester Guardian*. They came back next week with the unexpected but unanimous verdict, made plain by their summaries, that the speech was 'badly composed.' I comforted them with the suggestion that a speech may sometimes be 'composed' to meet the changing moods of a volatile audience, and assured them that the distinguished orator in question would certainly not re-publish his speech as he had delivered it, to the damage of his literary reputation. But their verdict showed conclusively that the members of the class were no longer content to submit their judgment to a popular opinion, or to their own first impressions.(a)

23–24. Criticism of the exercise of making paraphrases as ordinarily practised in England

23. Summaries of the kind to which I refer are clearly to be distinguished from paraphrase. It seems perfectly

work from which it is taken, the place of that work in the life-work of the author, and its historical and moral significance; to elicit, with the help of his class, if possible, the master-idea of the piece, and to criticize the success or failure of the author in carrying out his intention; and, further, to criticize, if need be, the authenticity of the text.

He will by this time have dealt with the general significance and matter of the piece, with the main questions of 'invention' and 'arrangement,' but only with detailed expressions in so far as the understanding of the piece, as a whole, depends on the interpretation. He will now have to examine it more minutely. It is with the question of 'diction,' or choice of words, that are indissolubly bound up the majority of those real and fascinating problems of style on which the impressionists have taught us no longer to dogmatize, but of which the generalized scientific treatment is yet in its infancy.[1] The harmony of the sentence and the period; the charm, force, and appropriateness of images presented or suggested; the touches, more persuasive than logic, by which the author appeals to his audience, and the blows by which he drives them: these, and similar things, are the factors of style which the literary teacher of the present day is perhaps least likely to pass over.[2] There is one thing finally to be remembered: that the teacher, if he has learnt how to read, has it in his own power to remove those cobwebs of the brain that are apt, after study, to obscure the first fair impression of a great work of art, in poetry or prose. The living voice promptly sweeps them away.

26. Value of the study of the great English classics

26. For such literary criticism as we have sketched in outline to be first-rate of its kind, for it to be on the level of the classical teaching in our best secondary schools, preparation, and the preparation of years rather than of hours is, doubt-

[1] See also Chapter IV, below.
[2] See Sir Walter Raleigh's *Style* (Edward Arnold, 1897).

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONS OF THE DIFFERENT UNITS OF A COMPOSITION TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE COMPOSITION AS A WHOLE, WITH A SKETCH OF THE SCIENCE OF MEANING

1. Introduction

1. In introducing this chapter, I purposely refrain from defining what I mean by units. The reason will become apparent later. But I want from the first to show the relation of this chapter to certain topics with which I have dealt earlier or shall deal later.[1]

2, 3. Semantics, the science of meaning. Its major importance both for the teacher and for the general public

2. I begin with the meaning of words and phrases. In Chapter III (§ 13) I have touched upon important questions relating to the discrimination in meaning between words and phrases that are closely allied in sense, and on the insufficiency of dictionaries in many cases to enable us to make such discriminations clear.

To Lesson VIII in Chapter VII I have given the title 'The Right Word,' but the lesson itself shows that no particular word or phrase can be regarded as 'the right word,' or 'the right phrase,' without taking into account both the context of other words and the environment of circumstance in which it is used. These factors are overlooked by many writers on the subject, but in discussing the meaning of the word 'right' in those expressions, we must always bear in mind both the general purpose of the document in which the 'word' or 'phrase' occurs and the audience for whom it

[1] For reasons which the reader will appreciate, my quotations do not always appear in their historic order, but I have given, as far as possible, the dates of the sources quoted.

ately, to several of which I shall refer again later.(a) The book which seems to me most immediately useful for a brief survey of semantics, especially in its relation to school-teaching, is Dr. Ballard's valuable work on *Thought and Language*, published in 1934, of which I have spoken before. I confine myself in the present chapter to questions which seem to me of major importance to the teacher in giving the kind of teaching I wish to advocate.

It is certainly of major importance for the teacher to bear in mind that the problems of meaning are not the concern of specialists only, but of every thinking person.

They may affect the greater issues of war and of peace. I give two examples. It may well be asked how far the use of the alluring term 'self-determination' affected the Peace of Versailles in 1919, and later the collapse of the smaller nations under the heel of Hitler.(b) And in still more recent times, we have seen how the term 'appeasement'—which was used with approval when the majority of Britons welcomed with relief Mr. Neville Chamberlain's agreement with Hitler at Munich in 1938—fell into almost complete discredit when that majority came to regard the Munich policy as the immediate cause of the Second World War. What is important for our immediate and limited purpose, is that no one could to-day accept without further explanation the word 'appeasement' as the simple equivalent of the word 'pacification,' as it appears in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* of 1933. The word has acquired a new significance. In the minds of the majority of the English public it has become a term of reproach; nor can we foresee whether it will ever recover its former status.

A similar change has taken place in the United States; and a distinguished American philosopher spoke recently of 'the fallacy now known as appeasement.'(c)

It is not here the place to discuss the rights or wrongs of political policies or actions; but it is certain that no study of semantics can be satisfactory without a knowledge of the

5. What holds good of music holds good of language, both oral and written, as Butler himself also points out; and indeed it is far easier for the musical performer to go back to the elements of his art, in most cases learnt long after infancy, than for any of us to remember how we learnt words and sentences, if that were indeed possible (op. cit. pp. 5–12).

In some ways the elements of musical performance are more elusive than those of speech, but in others they are more easily spoken about for the simple reason that when we are talking about them we are talking about something that is not speech itself, while in talking about the meaning of words and sentences we always have to use words to explain what we are saying about words. There is thus a vicious circle from which it might seem at first sight impossible to escape—and it is never easy. 'We realize,' says a recent American Report, 'that language is ill adapted for talking about itself.[1] Yet we cannot imagine that so many people would have attempted this work of analysis for themselves and others unless they believed that they could reach some measure of success in so difficult a task.'

6, 7. Sketch of the analyses of Ballard and of Gardiner. The distinction between the 'meaning of a thing' and 'the thing actually meant.' The relation of the 'meaning' of a word as given in the dictionary to the thing actually referred to when the word is used in the course of ordinary speech. Reference to Ogden and Richards. The environment of circumstance

6. 'We cannot,' says Ballard, early in his *Thought and Language*, 'think clearly about language, nor can we discuss it with any degree of profit, unless we bear in mind that we are always dealing, not with one category, words, but with three categories—thoughts, words, and things. With any one of these three left out language, in its strictest sense, could not exist.' 'And,' he adds, 'in this simple act of communicating

[1] See Note on the Teaching of the Mother Tongue in the United States, Chapter XI, Section A, below.

meant' when we use such a word in ordinary speech. We find from the dictionary that the word 'cake' is not only used to designate a piece of some sweetened mixture akin to bread, but that it may also be used to designate a flattish piece of soap, or a flat portion of coagulated blood, or of some other material. But the environment of circumstance described in the illustration of Gardiner quoted above excludes such other things entirely from our mind. Moreover, the 'thing meant' by the word 'cake' in that illustration is limited to *a particular piece of cake* of which some of the ingredients were probably visible to the person to whom it was offered, though no precise enumeration of them would probably be found in any dictionary. Thus the use of the single word 'cake,' *in this particular environment of circumstance*, on the one hand restricts its meaning to a particular sort of cake, and on the other hand extends our knowledge of it by conveying to our mind further details about it.[1]

8. Words are not generally used singly, but in an environment of other words commonly called 'the context'

8. Yet in one respect, Gardiner's illustration given above is exceptional, for in speaking we mostly use words not singly in isolation from other words but in combination with them. Each word, then, has not only an environment of circumstance but an *environment of other words*, commonly called 'the context,' both of which help in the specification of the 'thing meant,' firstly by excluding from the mind of the listener other things which might conceivably have been meant, and,

[1] I had developed the same argument independently of Gardiner in an article on *Thoughts and Words* in *The Times Educational Supplement* for 16 August, 1930, p. 353, where I wrote: 'I pursue the connexion between meaning and context. Here context should be understood in a wide sense. It may be a material and moral context not expressed as a sentence, because no such expression is required by the circumstances. It is easy to give an example. Two hungry men, after a long day's tramp, knock at the door of a cottager; the door opens and they say, simultaneously and expressively, "Onions"—not "I smell onions which must be being fried in a frying-pan, and which I hope to eat. How jolly!" or anything of the kind—but just the word "Onions." The context gives the meaning, and the one word here renders it perfectly.'

words: 'We must therefore abandon,' he said, 'the notion that a word has only one meaning.'(*a*)

11. Michel Bréal, writing in 1887,[1] says that anyone dealing with the history of changes in meaning who takes words only into account would run the risk of overlooking part of the facts, or would be in danger of explaining them wrongly. . . . 'Language is not made up only of [single] words; it consists of groups of words and of phrases. . . . It is not the word,' he says, 'which in our mind forms a distinct unit; it is the idea. . . . If the idea is simple, it matters little whether its expression is complex. Our mind will only perceive it as a whole (*notre esprit n'en percevra que la totalité*). One may even go further, and ask oneself whether the majority of people have any clear and distinct conception of a word' (op. cit. p. 16).

He passes on to another idea with which I have dealt in Chapter II, §§ 5 and 7 above. 'Language,' he says, 'is essentially a work of collaboration, in which the listener and the speaker take an equal part. The listener seizes the idea, and combines into one whole (*en un seul corps*) what is intended to be understood as a whole (*ce qui doit être compris d'ensemble*). Those missionaries who were the first to set down in writing the languages of uncivilized peoples know how difficult it is to recognize the beginnings and the endings of the words.'[2] Thus Bréal, like Jackson and Gardiner, in discussing the meaning of a word, takes its context of other words into account; and, like Butler and Locke, to whom I shall return presently, he also takes into account the listener

[1] In a tract, *L'Histoire des Mots*, fasc. 44 of the *Mémoires . . . publiés par le Musée Pédagogique* (Paris, Delagrave). See End-note (*b*) to this section.

[2] On the point of translating the words of uncivilized people, reference should be made to a recent book by a distinguished American anthropologist, Mrs. Margaret Meade, *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (W. M. Morrow and Co., New York, 1943). See especially the Introduction to this book, which raises the whole question of translation, and the earlier statement by Head referred to in End-note (*c*) to § 9 and End-note (*a*) to § 22 of the present chapter. But the translator who is really bilingual realizes how easily the *traduttore* (translator) may become a *traditore* (traitor). One sees it not seldom in translations from French into English and *vice versa*.

'are not to be had,' and further that the provision of words 'is so scanty in respect of the infinite variety of our thoughts' that a writer is often forced to use the same word in somewhat different senses. But, he adds, the writer owes it to his reader to make it plain if he does so.[1] Locke, as we shall see, underestimated both the magnitude and the difficulties of the task.

13. Locke also failed to perceive the general problems of figurative language, which he regards as an all but intolerable evil. He devotes a whole chapter (Chapter X) of Book 3 of his *Essay* to what he terms 'the abuse of words.' I quote from it the following striking passage:

'§ 34. *Seventhly, figurative language also an abuse of language.*— Since wit and fancy finds easier entertainment in the world than dry truth and real knowledge, figurative speeches and allusion in language will hardly be admitted as an imperfection or abuse of it. I confess, in discourses where we seek rather pleasure and delight than information and improvement, such ornaments as are borrowed from them can scarce pass for faults. But yet, if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetoric besides order and clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment, and so, indeed, are perfect cheats.'

He adds:

'It is evident how much men love to deceive, and be deceived, since rhetoric, that powerful instrument of error and deceit, has its established professors, is publicly taught, and has always been had in great reputation. . . . It is in vain to find fault with those arts of deceiving wherein men find pleasure to be deceived.'[2]

[1] Book 3, chap. xi, §§ 26, 27. The passage begins: 'If men will not be at the pains to declare the meaning of their words, and definitions of their terms are not to be had; yet this is the least that can be expected, that in all discourses, wherein one man pretends to instruct or convince another, he should use the same word constantly in the same sense.'

[2] I have somewhat modernized the punctuation in the passages quoted for reasons which will be obvious to the reader who compares them with the original.

16. The psychological analysis by Darmesteter of the attachment of different senses to the same audible sign without causing confusion

16. Darmesteter points out that if a language had as many words as those who speak it have 'simple ideas' it would have to create a new word for every simple idea. But even so, the method of creation would often be insufficient to render the new ideas, or, if it were not, our memory would be crushed under the weight of words. We therefore give to the same audible sign different meanings, each of which really corresponds to a new word, endowed with its own life and function. These different words, nevertheless, retain the same sound, and it is only in the 'artificial catalogues called dictionaries' that they are classed under the same heading, because they have a common origin. Yet, strange as it may seem, when we need such audible signs they come to our memory only with the special significance with which we wish to use them, without our being troubled by the different other senses that may be given to them. 'If,' says Darmesteter, 'I want to express the idea that a particular pupil "is at the head of his class," the words *head* and *class* occur at once to my mind with the special significance in which I use them and without any need for me to pay the slightest attention to the other meanings belonging to these words' (op. cit., chap. ii).

We see here with Jackson and Gardiner how the use of words in an environment of other words limits their area of reference (to use the phrase of Gardiner). We shall come later to areas of reference of a different kind, no less important.

17. Words and phrases with a constant meaning, comparatively few in number

17. But I want first to speak of a category of words of which the meaning undergoes neither a limitation nor an

out, the name of one kind of object is used for another because of some character common to both. Thus the leaf of a tree gave its name to a leaf of paper because of the thinness characteristic of both.[1] The same metaphor connecting the leaf of a tree with a leaf of paper is used in late Latin, in English, in French, and in German.[2] I have already quoted a similar but rather more complicated use of metaphor in connexion with the English word 'head' and the French *tête*.

19 First and second terms of a metaphor

19. In dealing with metaphors, it is convenient, for the sake of brevity, to make certain distinctions. In speaking of the use of the word 'head' in plain language to designate the head of an animal, and then later, metaphorically, to designate the head of a class, I shall call the word 'head' with its first signification as the head of an animal *the first term* of the metaphor, and the term 'head' used to designate the head of a class, *the second term* of the metaphor. It is, of course, only when I am speaking of the second term that I have to refer to the first. This is the metaphor chosen by Darmesteter as being of the simplest kind. As we shall see, there are other and much more complicated metaphors in which the mind has present to it, more or less clearly or vaguely, both the first term and the second term.(*a*) This leads me to my next classification, which is in common use.

20. Live and dead metaphors

20. When a metaphor is used sufficiently often, the connexion in one's mind between the original meaning of the word, the first term of the metaphor, and the metaphorical meaning, its second term, may cease. We do not think of the head of a man when we speak of the head of a class. We do not think of a leaf of a tree when we speak of the leaf of a

[1] *La Vie des Mots*, § 30.

[2] According to the *Shorter O.E.D.* this particular metaphor is found in Old English.

interval. Similarly, the word 'scale' ceased as a musical term to be associated with the same word 'scale' in any earlier sense. They suffered as metaphors a quick and painless death.

21. Explicit and implicit metaphors

21. One more distinction, before passing on to a more general consideration of metaphors. I have spoken so far only of what I will call 'explicit' metaphors, those in which the later or second term has the same kind of grammatical function as the first (as in the metaphors 'head of a class,' 'leaf of a book'); but for certain purposes what may be called 'implicit' metaphors, those in which the second term has a different grammatical function from the first, may be far more effective in speech. If we say 'The elms were nodding in the breeze,' we do not explicitly compare the tops of the elms to our own heads, but by the use of the word 'nodding' we imply the comparison of a motion of the tops of the elms with a particular kind of motion of our own heads. If, again, we say 'The wind was sighing in the willows' we are using the same kind of implicit metaphor in a more complex form. I am under the impression that both in verse and in prose implicit metaphors are more common than explicit ones.[1] One would have to make a statistical investigation to discover whether that impression is justified by the facts.

22, 23. The fundamental importance of metaphors as a medium of social communication, and as a means of expressing abstract ideas. The views of Darmesteter

22. Starting from simple examples such as those which I have quoted, Darmesteter shows how the mental processes which lead to the use of metaphors are constantly taking place in our minds, and points out the fundamental import-

[1] I may be mistaken, but I do not remember to have seen before the distinction between implicit and explicit metaphors. In any elaborate analysis of metaphors, the distinction should, I think, be of use.

'The mind (*l'esprit*) thinks not only of material objects which strike the senses, it also forms (*il pense*) a multitude of abstract ideas conceived by its own activity. . . . Metaphor alone has given man the power to fathom the thoughts of his fellow-creatures. In none of the languages of which we can study the history is there any abstract word of which we know the etymology which is not derived from a concrete word.'

24. Views on metaphor of Butler, Greenough and Kittredge, and Richards

24. Samuel Butler, in an address on *Thought and Language* first given in 1890, and re-delivered and revised in 1894, wrote, 'Everything we say is metaphorical if we choose to be captious. Scratch the simplest expressions, and you will find the metaphor.'[1]

In less picturesque phraseology, Greenough and Kittredge took the same large view of the function of metaphor: 'It occurs everywhere and one can hardly utter a sentence without employing it.'[2] Professor J. Isaacs has drawn attention to the very interesting use made by Coleridge of newly created scientific terms as metaphors.[3]

Richards in various works and especially in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, attributes to metaphor perhaps an even greater social and philosophical importance than his predecessors, but his theories seem to me not very different otherwise from those of Darmesteter and later writers whom I have named above.[4] I have drawn attention to his special nomenclature.

25. The use of metaphor in discussing the Fine Arts

25. If the teacher wishes to find metaphors ready to hand, he has only to turn to the criticisms of music and the other fine arts in almost any daily or weekly newspaper.

[1] *Thought and Language*, printed in the *Selected Essays* (Jonathan Cape, 1927), see pp. 230–231.

[2] See § 18, above.

[3] See his article on Coleridge's *Critical Terminology*, in vol. xxi of *Essays and Addresses . . . by Members of the English Association* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1936).

[4] See also list in End-note (*a*) to § 3 of this chapter.

The word 'colour' is constantly used in describing both musical compositions and musical performances, and the 'colour' is sometimes qualified by such a word as 'rich.' The titles given to musical compositions afford similar examples. Schumann called one of his piano-pieces 'Why?' (*Warum?*), and another, 'Dreaming' (*Träumerei*). A familiar instance is the 'Moonlight' Sonata, composed by Beethoven in 1802, which is said to have received its name from a contemporary critic.

Such instances of metaphor could be multiplied indefinitely; and they are almost as frequent in discussions on other branches of fine art. To give a single instance: the adjectives 'strong' and 'weak' are constantly used in speaking of drawings, paintings, and sculpture.

26–33. The element of 'imagined sound' in reading written language. The views of Dr. Henry Bradley and R. L. Stevenson. Certain influences of punctuation on 'imagined sound': examples. Methods of teaching our pupils to be 'sound-conscious' in writing. Phonetics, in its widest sense, an essential element in semantics

26. The action of written prose on our thoughts and emotions often depends in part, and sometimes in large part, on the 'imagined sound' of the words as they appear in writing or print. In the silent reading of verse, the influence of 'imagined sound' is commonly recognized. But I am not concerned here with verse and its special influence on the mind (a subject which I have discussed elsewhere[1]), but only with prose.

27. The speech of everyday life, as well as of great oratory, consists of something much more than what I may call the 'simple addition' of a series of isolated word-units, word-units with the expressionless pronunciation indicated in an ordinary dictionary or even in a dictionary by a specialist in phonetics. Our words as they follow one another in the natural sequence of speech are uttered with an infinite

[1] In *The Relation of Poetry to Verse* (see § 22, above, footnote).

peated; and both cry aloud to be perpetually varied.... Each phrase in literature is built of sounds, as each phrase in music consists of notes. One sound echoes, demands, and harmonizes with another; and the art of rightly using these concordances is the final art in literature.'

I use the word 'listen' advisedly because I find it impossible in reading these sentences not to listen to their 'imagined sound,' to me both impressive and beautiful, although Stevenson conveys to my mind only part of a complex truth. Since his time other writers have incidentally repeated some of Stevenson's ideas. Thus, Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, in reviewing a book in the *Sunday Times* in 1944, said that it was 'written for the ear as well as for the eye.' Dr. Bradley expressed the same idea when he used the term 'sound-picture.' Dr. I. A. Richards perhaps made an overstatement when he said in 1925 that 'auditory images are among the most obvious of mental happenings'; but in a chapter entitled 'The Analysis of a Poem' he used the happy metaphor 'the sound of the word in the mind's ear.'[1]

30. As a matter of fact, in the writing of everyday we do try to indicate by symbols such as notes of interrogation, commas, semi-colons, dashes, dots, and so on, the changes of *tempo* of the words as they would be spoken, and, to the experienced reader, something of their changes of tone. We all realize that the English 'Yes,' spoken with a rising intonation, does not mean assent, but is equivalent to 'Is it so?'; and the note of interrogation makes the reader imagine the rising tone. On the contrary, if the word 'Yes' is spoken with a level or a falling intonation, although we have no written mark to show it, it indicates assent. The word 'No' again varies its meaning by variations of intonation of the same kind. Oddly enough, Hughlings Jackson does not refer to

[1] *Principles of Literary Criticism*, pp. 118–119. Professor Bonamy Dobree, in his book on *Modern Prose Style* (Clarendon Press, 1934), goes so far as to suggest that the imagined sound of an author's voice is what we roughly call 'style' (op. cit. pp. 3–4). The statement seems to me exaggerated, though there is an element of truth in it.

pupils to read the text of a play that they are about to see acted. They will realize that on the stage the 'meaning' of the words used may be altered by things which cannot easily be indicated on the printed page—the gestures and facial expressions of the actors, and the scene as a whole, but not by these things alone. They will perceive the surprisingly increased significance that may be given to the words by changes in intonation and sound-intensity, and, at intervals, by the pauses and even the hesitations of the speaker. I remember Mr. A. B. Walkley, the dramatic critic of *The Times*, writing in 1911 that Bergson, the philosopher, who spoke with a quiet but surpassing eloquence, had 'acted' his lectures on the Soul at University College, London. Having heard the lectures delivered, I realized in retrospect the possible truth of Walkley's observation, though Bergson spoke so 'naturally' that I doubt if many of his listeners thought for a moment that his speech was anything but spontaneous. I should have described his manner as simple and unaffected.[1]

33. Professor Firth, using the condensed nomenclature of science, has indeed emphasized the view that phonetics (and I think he means here phonetics in its most comprehensive sense) must be regarded as an essential element in semantics, the science of meaning.[2]

34, 35. Plain speech and metaphor. Plain speech in great environments of circumstance may reach great heights of expression. But our pupils should not be discouraged from the use of metaphors that are their own and not imitations. The rôle of the teacher in this matter, a modest one

34. I return from these matters, much less remote than they may seem at first sight, to more obvious problems of teaching. Without underrating the importance of what I may call personal metaphors, i.e. metaphors other than those

[1] I am sorry that I cannot at the moment lay hands on Walkley's article.
[2] See § 11, above, and End-note (*b*) to that section.

matter the teacher must be modest and not arrogant if he is to achieve the ultimate aim of training his pupils to think for themselves. If his natural tendency is towards conceit, let him be proud of his humility in dealing with the developing minds of youth. Such modesty is not always easy of attainment.

36, 37. On sentences and their inter-relations in a composition. The views of Jackson and Richards, and of Gardiner and Ballard

36. From the first quotation given in § 9 above it may be inferred that Hughlings Jackson, while he refused to regard the 'word' as a unit of speech except in particular instances, did so regard the 'sentence.' Nor was he the first to do so. I quote from Dr. Richards: 'the sentence, of course, as Aristotle taught, is the unit of discourse.'[1] The contexts suggest that Jackson and Richards mean the same thing.

Much longer discussions of this subject by Professor Alan Gardiner and Dr. P. B. Ballard show that the matter is not a simple one. From three definitions of the sentence given by Gardiner, Ballard has selected the following as the most useful for everyday purposes:

'A sentence is a word or a set of words followed by a pause and revealing an intelligible purpose.'

It cannot, however, be said that this definition covers the whole range of meanings to which the word 'sentence' is applied in ordinary speech or writing. The term 'sentence,' whether it refers only to a single word or to a number of words, varies so much with different authors that it is probably impossible to devise any formula applicable to all the forms of expression which are in common parlance called 'sentences.'

Dr. Ballard devotes a chapter of his *Thought and Language* to the subject. In it he takes up arms against the definition of the term 'sentence' as 'a set of words which expresses a

[1] See *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, p. 47.

not only words and sentences, paragraphs and pages, and so on, but the plan of our composition as a whole, whether it be long or short, the plan which Buffon regarded, and I think rightly, as the foundation of style.[1]

39. In what has gone before, I have insisted on the necessity of making pupils think out for themselves the way to fulfil a defined purpose, but in the matter of planning, perhaps more than in any other, teacher and pupil may co-operate in learning from great models, though still without any notion of slavish imitation. The planning of a complex composition is never an easy matter, but much may be taught at school if the teacher will give to it the necessary time and thought.

40. Yet there has been a noticeable tendency among recent English writers on the subject to overlook the importance of the plan. I quote from Pascal, a predecessor of Buffon, and recognized as one of the greatest of all writers in modern times. 'Let it not be said,' he wrote in a famous passage, 'that I have said nothing new; the order of my matter is new. At tennis the two sides play with the same ball, but one places it better. . . . As if the same thoughts did not form a different body by a different arrangement of the discourse, just as the same words form different thoughts by being differently arranged.'[2]

The analysis of Pascal is penetrating; and the analysis by the young writer of what he has himself written will reveal to him defects, not only of formal arrangement but of conception, which he had not even suspected. That is true for us all, and in all subjects.

41. As a nation we have been occupied with war-planning, of a complexity and on a scale previously unknown, with the single end of victory in view. Now we are no less occupied, and rightly occupied, with post-war planning, with its many ends in view, and hence of an even greater complexity.

[1] See Chapter X, below, § 21, *ad fin.*

[2] *Pensées*, ed. E. Havet, 4th edition, vol. i, p. 99.

to look for larger units; and for convenience, we classify them under such names as phrases, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, and even volumes.

44. We may sum up by saying that when we try to analyse any composition for sense, the size and kind of unit which we choose for such analysis must vary with the purpose of the analysis.

45. In the preceding chapter[1] I drew attention to the necessity for the young writer to consider his composition *as a whole* besides considering its details, on which it is so much easier both for teacher and pupils to concentrate. There has been a tendency among writers on semantics, as well as among teachers, to take too narrow a view of their subject.

As I have pointed out again and again, it is necessary for the young writer to read over his composition, however long or however short, as a whole, and to ask himself those questions of fundamental importance on which I insist once more: What was the object of my composition? To what audience was it addressed? Do I think that I have achieved my purpose? In other words, Have I succeeded or failed? or, How far have I succeeded or failed?

These are the questions which the experienced writer asks himself consciously or unconsciously—very often unconsciously. It is the resultant action of our words that matters.

46. It is no merely theoretic view that I wish to put forward. An official of an important Ministry to whom I explained it recently told me that his fellow officials often failed to distinguish explicitly, to distinguish, as Locke did, between the composition written for oneself which Locke called a 'record,' and the composition written for one or more other people, which I have called a 'message.'

47. For the young writer it is especially important to realize that no amount of purely microscopic scrutiny of the smaller units of his composition, indispensable as it may be,

[1] Chapter III, § 17 (7).

CHAPTER V

LATER EXPERIMENTS (WITH PUPILS OF 13 TO 14)

Introduction

THE experiments which furnished the material both for this chapter and for the two following ones were actually derived from lessons given to three different sets of pupils at different times. The major part of my text is derived from lessons given in 1931 at the West Kensington Central School to a class of about thirty boys between the ages of 13 and 14, as a preparation for eight school broadcasts on 'Thinking and Writing,' delivered in that year. I was told by the boys that they gave about four hours to thinking out each composition. They were allowed from 2 to 2½ hours in school to write out their compositions, and did so under supervision and without notes.

A second portion was furnished by a number of pupils of schools in different parts of England (including the West Kensington Central School), who 'listened in' to the broadcasts and sent me their work by post.

The third portion was furnished some years later by a demonstration-class of twenty-four boys from the West Kensington Central School, when they appeared on a platform at the London County Hall, with an audience of over a hundred teachers who watched the proceedings but took no active part in them.

My own problem in dealing with this material for the readers of this book has been less easy than it would have been had I simply reproduced my broadcasts verbatim. I have had to keep two kinds of audience constantly in mind—the real audiences whom I addressed in class and the readers of this book. The portions of my text between square brackets are addressed to my readers, but they

I know beforehand that a lot of you won't agree. A lot of you hate writing—hate writing a letter, for instance. Mr. Mais, in his B.B.C. talks, asked a class, at which I was present, if those who liked writing a letter would hold up their hands. Not a single hand was held up, though it was a girls' class and girls are supposed to like writing better than boys. Some of the pupils changed their minds after listening to Mr. Mais's persuasion for a little time. I don't know whether I shall be as persuasive. But I know enough to be pretty sure that with most of you there's a good deal of persuasion to be done, and my task won't be easy. And perhaps this first talk is going to be the hardest of all, because I haven't a particular problem to discuss, but just this general question of thinking and writing.

Do you think before you speak? Not always. Sometimes the words just jump out, if you are excited or cross, and you may be surprised to hear the words that you have spoken. But mostly you have to think before you write, and you perhaps find that duller than the actual writing.

If we ask ourselves about the differences and the likenesses between speaking and writing, we shall get right to the heart of our subject.

First of all, if we are speaking, we are speaking to someone else, aren't we, except when, like actors sometimes on the stage, we talk to ourselves or 'soliloquize.' You know how writers of plays make actors talk to themselves to tell a part of a story that they can't conveniently tell otherwise, and you are supposed not to listen to it in the ordinary way, but just to overhear—'My parents were poor but honest. When I was ten, my father died. I determined, in spite of colossal difficulties, to conquer the world, and here I am a successful man'—and so on. No one talks like that in real life, and if an actor who does it swells himself out, very self-important and pompous, you just laugh at him. There *is*, of course, the great soliloquy, like 'To be or not to be' in *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet is trying to examine his own mind

Here you have the central problem of the *record*, the thing written for yourself in which you are your own audience—Shall I understand it when I want to use it? I recently came across some lecture-notes of my own written many years ago. Some of them were still perfectly clear and intelligible; others were quite unintelligible. If your notes are clear and serve their purpose *for as long as you need them*, they are successful. If you can't understand them when you need them, they are failures. You are here your own examiner and decide for yourself whether you have failed or succeeded.

I come now to a much more difficult question, the question of what I call the *message*, in which you are writing not for yourself, but for some other person or some other people whom you can't know half as well as you know yourself. I am going to use this word *message* in a very wide sense, much wider than the usual one, to mean anything written for another person or other persons, to distinguish it from the record, the thing written for oneself. Why do we write for other people? You will probably say—Because we have to!—meaning, not because we want to. But, in later life, when you have left school and examinations are over, you will find that though you may often write because you have to, you will also write because you want to. And always, always, you will have to keep in mind both the people for whom you are writing, and the reason why you are writing. There is a question of success and failure in the message just as there is in the record; and it is far more difficult to know beforehand what kind of game you are to play in order to succeed. Again I ask, why do we write for other people to read what we have written? For many reasons. Here are some of them:

(1) We may want to ask or persuade them to do something for us. If we are at the seaside we may ask our parents to send us something we have left behind, or try to persuade them to let us stay longer than we meant to.

(2) We may want to order people to do something. If

always to keep in mind—just as with the record—we must be intelligible. If our message isn't understood, it's a poor kind of message, isn't it? Not a message at all. Only an attempt at a message—a failure.

I remember reading in the *Life of Sir John French* (the first Earl of Ypres) that the letters of a general under his command were all wordy and unintelligible, and that he had written an official message which was full of contradictions and unintelligible to the officer to whom he had despatched it.[1] Disastrous consequences may result from messages like that.

I come back to the comparison between speaking and writing. When you are speaking to someone, you can often tell at once whether you are understood or not. The person may ask you questions or you may ask him questions to make sure that he understands. But look at the written page before you; it can't ask you any questions, and if you ask it questions it can't answer. You have to do all the questioning and answering yourself, to make as sure as possible whether what you have written is likely to be understood or not. If you want all the people for whom you are writing to understand, you must keep in mind those least likely to do so.

You will get practice in your other classes in writing answers for your teacher or an examiner who will often know already all that you can possibly have to say. But I shall ask you to write exercises for me of quite another kind. I am going to ask you to begin with an exercise that you mayn't think very serious.

This is the outline of the story I want you to write for next time. [For outline see beginning of next lesson.] How long is the story to be? Four hundred or five hundred words. I want you to say just *how*, *when*, *where*, everything happened. Try to make your brother see the things happening, hear what was said.

[1] See *Life of Sir John French*, p. 293.

The story is to consist of four hundred or five hundred words. I want you to say *how*, *when*, and *where* everything happened. Try to make your brother see the things happening, hear what was said.

I read through every exercise, and made notes on most of them, but without any attempt at complete correction. Such attempts I regard as a sheer waste of time for the teacher. Hardly any pupils read such corrections. I began Lesson II as follows:]

I think that nearly everyone who wrote the story of which I gave an outline last week enjoyed writing it; and many took a great deal of trouble, and gave two hours or more to the writing, correction, and copying out of the work. And besides that, some of you have given that kind of thought to it at odd times that is often the most fruitful of all for imaginative work. You know the tale of that Greek man of science, Archimedes, who was asked by the king of Syracuse to find out whether his crown consisted of pure gold or a mixture of metals, and solved the problem while he was thinking in his bath. Lots of our best ideas come to us at odd times like that, but only if we have been thinking beforehand about what we want to do.

Now I shall read to you some stories, and I shall ask you to show by voting in class what you think of each. Story I is called:

A Lost Chance

William Brown, who lived in the East End of London, had a great passion for films, and especially thrilling ones. One day in the winter, when it was very cold, he had a holiday from school and he went to the 'Pictures.'

This was a very small place and only cost twopence to go in. The only other people in the theatre were three nursemaids, one very old man, who was snoring very loudly, a burly sailor, and a crowd of small children.

After a little while the girl in the pay-box looked up, sat down, and started thumping out a quick step, and the lights went out.

proportion, like a man with a very big head, a small body, and tiny legs, and I drew a sketch of such a man on the blackboard. I then continued:]

The author begins by giving picturesque details about the people in the theatre, which would have been excellent if the description of the theatre had been wanted as a central feature of the story, instead of being only introductory; and he really takes trouble with the film. Alas, his time is wasted for our purpose. He has left what should be the important part of the story like a dry skeleton, without any flesh on its bones, quite dull and uninteresting. The story might perhaps interest a younger brother in films, but it certainly wouldn't teach him much about seizing his opportunity of doing a plucky deed in real life, and not on the film. The *message* isn't successful, though the author shows that he could do much better

I now come to Story No. II,

The Dreamer

William Roberts went to the cinema one afternoon and saw a popular film hero jump from an aeroplane into a car and stop it from going over a cliff. He was so thrilled with this action that for a long time afterwards when he went out for walks he could be seen either sitting on a seat, or walking along very slowly, with a far-away look in his eyes, dreaming of being a hero. One Sunday morning he was walking round the lake in Regent's Park, still dreaming about how he would behave if he saw someone fall in. 'I would throw off my jacket and waistcoat and jump in,' he said to himself, 'then I would be a hero, and the centre of attraction.'

Soon after he became interested in some children who were playing with boats. One of them, more adventurous than the rest, took off his shoes and socks and began paddling out after his boat. All went well for some time, and the others were beginning to follow his example, when the boy's foot caught in something on the bottom of the lake, and he went over into the water and disappeared from view.

what he would do if a child fell in—and then just doesn't do it. The boy who falls in is paddling after a boat and catches his foot on something on the bottom. All the incident necessary is given to explain the falling in, but no more. Real imagination, the kind of imagination you want in real life and action; nothing improbable here, nor of the fairy-story kind. Then William goes for the keeper, according to plan, and the keeper gets hold of the drowning boy's clothes with a hook at the end of a long pole and hauls him out; it seems quite true to life. Then comes a delightful bit. The dreamer starts on his way home, at first self-satisfied and pleased with his own prompt action; but suddenly he remembers his own fine resolutions and is 'brought up with a jerk.' Good detail, that. So he doesn't boast when he gets home, as he had meant to do, but tells the story to his small brother, without saying that it had happened to himself, and asks his brother what he thinks about it. You notice that the author doesn't bore you by telling the story over again on paper. But his telling of it to his little brother obviously had the right effect, for his brother says of the would-be hero, 'Well, if he had really been plucky he would have jumped in and saved the boy without thinking whether it would make him a hero or not.' A thoroughly sound conclusion, isn't it? And then one more touch in drawing William Roberts's character: 'On hearing this William decided not to tell his brother that it was he who was the "pluckless one." ' His brother had told him a home-truth; but he didn't think it necessary to give himself away. And I like William's description of himself as the 'pluckless one.' I've never seen the word 'pluckless' before though I know the word 'luckless'; but it's created according to sound rules, and it seems to me just right. 'Coward' would have been perhaps going too far. Altogether I think this a very sound and happy piece of work. [The class agreed with me.]

I am now going to take Story III,

steeply. The child was tossing a ball up into the air and catching it, when, all of a sudden, an excited dog jumped up to get the ball, and cannoning into the child knocked it over. The child, being on the edge of the bank, fell straight into the water and was swept along in the rush of the water.

'Tommy was a good swimmer, but the thought of diving into the river and rescuing the child never once entered into his head. Instead, seeing a keeper nearby, Tommy rushed up to him and gasped out that a child had fallen into the river. The keeper, unlike Tommy, at once dived in and pulled the child out.

'As Tommy walked home he realized what a fool he had been, not to have dived in and rescued the child himself. He had had his chance to become a hero, and missed it.'

'Poor kind of hero, wasn't he?' said Dick's younger brother.

'That poor kind of chap was me!' laughed Dick.

That's the end. I vote for an A, or a B plus. But the story has one fault that Story II hadn't.

What about proportions? Don't you think all that part about the cinema is too long for the rest—just as in Story I? But Story III as a whole is far better than Story I. Here, as in Story II, the detail is of the kind needed. I like the explanation of how the child gets knocked into the water. He is throwing up a ball and an excited dog jumps after it and cannons into him. In this story, the ornamental water in the park is a river. Though unusual, that is quite possible. The Thames flows past Kew Gardens. And I liked the ending. Here the would-be hero, unlike the hero in Story II, confesses, and laughs at himself good-humouredly.

I now come to Story IV which the author calls

Opportunities Never Come Twice

Not long ago my youngest brother and I were standing near a bus stop, discussing the results of a scholarship, for which, if he passed, he would receive the obvious advantage of a removal to a high school.

The main trouble was his inability to make any really important decision for himself inside a twelvemonth.

'The second McGlucksky was walking home a few minutes later when it dawned upon his naturally stagnant brain that it would have suited him better in his rôle as the second McGlucksky to have plunged in without hesitation. So you see,' I concluded, 'it would have benefited Mr. Coates to have taken the opportunity when it came.' Here I became aware that my brother was nudging me and, looking down, I perceived that he was leering up at me (if such an expression can be used). He said, 'Do you know that we've just missed a bus? and all through you talking. Opportunities never come twice and neither will that bus!'

What about the plan of *that* story? [The class and I, and, I think, the writer also, thought it satisfactory.

After reading each composition (as well as I can, and probably I read it both more quickly and more effectively than the writer would do) I make it a practice to ask the writer to say quite frankly if *he* thinks it good or bad—and if he thinks it good he must say why he thinks it good, and if he thinks it bad, why he thinks it bad—and I leave the final decision to himself. He must feel that he has a right to his own opinion on this matter even though teacher, or class, or both, may differ from him.

I want to draw attention to one feature of this story which I think masterly. The young author realized the difficulty of pointing a moral to a younger brother, of giving what used to be called a 'pi-jaw.' And he set out quite definitely to make the 'pi-jaw' fail, as it probably would have done in real life. The story is begun with the two boys waiting for a bus, and when the narrator points the moral—that an opportunity of doing a plucky deed ought not to be missed—the younger brother says, 'Do you know that we've just missed a bus, and all through you talking? Opportunities never come twice and neither will that bus!' The writer had skilfully called the story 'Opportunities Never Come Twice.' He himself and the class criticized many minor points—the eyes that 'performed somersaults in their sockets'; the 'celluloid kiss' (this was of course a 'leg-pull'); the boy,

I hope you would not hesitate to dive in immediately and try to save the child. After all, while Jim was running to fetch the keeper, the child might have drowned.'

'Yes,' said George absent-mindedly, 'can you find a piece of jig-saw with a part of a head on it to fit into this puzzle?'

I said to the class: 'Here you see the fitting of the jig-saw puzzle employed in this story with exactly the same purpose as the waiting for the bus in Story IV to show that the imaginary hearer was much more interested in his puzzle than in his brother's story with a moral, and that the writer intended it to fail as a story with a moral.' One of the class rightly criticized the 'very watery grave' on the ground that the child would have been taken out and buried in a cemetery. The class as a whole was determined to have no 'make-believe' except when it was justified, as in the description of a 'make-believe' film, above.

I then set the exercise described at the beginning of Lesson III.]

LESSON III

The Telling of a Story (continued)

[I asked the class at the end of Lesson II to write a story of from three hundred to four hundred words, beginning with these fourteen words: 'It was midnight. I woke with a start. Something had moved in the room.'[1] I also asked them to define very briefly (1) the audience or public for whom they were writing, and (2) the object of their story, which might be only to interest or amuse their audience. I further asked them to prefix to the story a short plan of it, consisting of not more than ten or twelve lines.

I told them that a good way to test a story is to read it aloud to oneself, aloud and not in an undertone, but with all the expression, natural but not exaggerated expression,

[1] A first example of a story on this theme and its discussion in class is given in Chapter II, § 15, above.

With the coming of dawn I found that my mother would need a new cushion, but next door would need a new cat.

Now before you can really judge whether that is a good story or a bad story for its purpose, you must know what object and what audience the author had in mind. He tells us that he wrote it as if for the readers of the *Boy's Own Paper*, and that the object was to interest and amuse those readers.

[In my actual class rather less than half voted for A, rather more than half for B, and there was, I think, one C. My own vote, I said, would be for A, and by that I meant that I thought the story really good, but not that it was faultless.—I continued:]

The author's plan reads as follows: '1. The noise. 2. My actions. 3. A mishap—a death.' It is short, but he has a plan clearly in his mind, and the story seems to me in quite good proportion. Do you agree?

Now for details. I like his luminous watch. That showed him the time without turning on a light or lighting a candle. But I wonder how many of you noticed that, after the watch incident, there was something left out that should have been put in—he could see Polly asleep. By what kind of light could he see her? He ought to have told us. If the light had been strong moonlight he wouldn't have needed the luminous dial to see the time. 'Dim moonlight' would have been all right. Now about the air-gun. I think he was justified in speaking of an air-gun without further explanation in writing for the public that reads the *Boy's Own Paper*. If he had been writing for a boy of 6 or 7, he would not have been justified. You must always, in every kind of writing, have in your mind how much knowledge you may expect on the part of your audience. When he says he 'broke' his air-gun, he puts 'broke' between inverted commas to show that he is making a technical use of the term. He doesn't mean that he broke the air-gun so as to injure it, but that he turned the barrel on its pivot so that

gested this as an alternative, giving all the same facts, but in a different way: 'With the coming of dawn, I found that I had made a hole in my mother's cushion and had spoilt it and that I had killed the cat of our next-door neighbours.' Was that better or worse than the original? 'Oh, worse,' they all said, and I agreed. But why? This was the explanation of one boy. 'When you tell your readers all the facts there is nothing for them to do, but when you tell them the story as the author did, they have to put two and two together and do the thinking for themselves. Yes, and they like that better.' My class were all of that mind. I had told them that it may be more effective to leave something to the imagination of your readers than to tell them everything. On the other hand, you must be quite sure that you don't leave too much to them, but show them, as the author has done, that there is something for them to think about—a little problem for them to solve.]

Story II

I now come to Story II, by a B.B.C. listener at a girls' school at Chelmsford, written with the object of giving pleasure to a younger sister.

The Wrong Culprit

It was midnight. I woke with a start. Something had moved in my room. Gathering my senses I switched on the lights. I pulled my dressing-gown on in such a hurry that I don't know which way I got it on, and examined my room everywhere. I could see nothing and concluded that my imagination had been working. I returned to my bed, pulled off my dressing-gown, switched off the lights, and settled down.

I again woke and the first thing my eye rested on was the curtain moving to and fro. This startled me because I remembered closing my window the night before on account of the rain. Being more and more terrified, I sat up in bed and listened intently. Having no reward for this effort I took to my final refuge

with furze. First the burglar catches his foot in the furze and trips; then the hero trips in his turn and is going to have a bad time, when, at the expense only of a sprained ankle, with a well-directed stone he lays the villain low, and the villain is captured—almost like one on the films. I give one more story, a little less thrilling, Story III. The author prefixes to his story details of his object, audience, and plan.

The Boarding House Mystery

(1) My audience: a friend. (2) My object: to interest. (3) My plan: (*a*) mystery, (*b*) trap, (*c*) solution.

It was midnight. I woke with a start. Something had moved in the room. I looked with startled eyes. Immediately I caught sight of this apparition my mind went back to the story of the haunted house which one of the other holiday-makers had told us at supper.

The figure, which was clothed in white, slowly moved over to the dressing table where the silver cup I had won at the carnival was resting. The prize was slowly picked up, and seemingly weighed as though [the figure was] trying to find its worth.

I was going to shout but I dared not shout in case this ghost should turn round and strike me with his sword; although I could not see a sword I guessed he must have one, as all ghosts have a sword or other weapon.

There was no need to shout however for the figure put down the cup and glided out of the room. For some time after this I remained in bed not daring to set foot out of bed. When at last I did summon up my courage to go and look along the passage I saw nothing but imagined I heard the sound of a door closing.

The next morning at breakfast I broached the subject to my fellow boarders who scoffed at the idea, and one even suggested that I had had too much supper and that the ghost was a character in a nightmare play.

Since I had more time to look at it I was convinced that my disturber was something substantial. I could prove this by the finger-marks on the cup, which I was sure were not there yesterday.

the 'fairy-story imagination' in which anything can happen. Even in this second set of stories we have tried to keep our details consistent with one another. Stories are useful as exercises in 'real imagination.' And our criticisms have been useful in another way: we have tested our stories for consistency. It is difficult to tell whether a great deal of what we read in printed newspapers and books is true or false; but if we test what we read in the same kind of way that we have tested these stories, we can see at any rate whether it is consistent or not; and often in that way we can tell for ourselves that what is in print is not necessarily to be trusted. We have learnt not to be carried away by smooth phrases or fine words. We have been learning both to construct and to criticize.

afford for these subjects. Then comes a second point. The writer must try, in his description, to make his reader feel that he is *talking* to him, with something of the zest that we all unconsciously put into our voices when we are talking to another person—not so easy.

[I went on to say:] I miss in some, though not all, of these compositions the enjoyment which you felt in writing your stories. I wonder what you will think of this letter.

Letter I

DEAR DICK,

Your last letter, with its description of your village, was most interesting and in reply to your question about my journey to school I will try to tell you about it. On starting out from the house I just glance about me to see whether anything has happened since last night. If I notice nothing unusual, I walk in a leisurely manner in the direction of Blythe Road, the road in which Jim Johnson lives, that boy I told you about. Instead of going towards the school, I walk away from it and go towards Buckingham's the butcher's, where my mother gets her meat and there I order some for dinner. Retracing my steps I pass Aynhoe Road, where once I was bitten by a dog, an awful looking thing, a bull-terrier, I think. Anyway I missed school for that day, for I had to go to the clinic in Shepherd's Bush Road, and then to the West London Hospital, where I had to have the place cleaned and painted with iodine. Passing a bicycle-shop I always look in the window in case a 'bike' is going cheap. Then the massive seven-storied building, the Post Office Savings Bank, comes into view. A glance at the clock on the very top floor in the centre tells me that it is half-past eight.

Then after leaving that behind, I pass the Post Office where, through a side-door, I can see men sorting the letters. Rounding the bend, I see Lyons's Foodstuffs Factory and Staff Stores on the right, and on the left Olympia rears itself. Shows are held here periodically. Hammersmith Road comes into view, as I round a bend in the road. At one corner is a well-known public house named The Bell and Anchor, and at the opposite corner is Lyons Staff Stores, where we get our cakes. Crossing

putting on your colours always to use words of just the right colour.

In another composition, quite good on the whole, a boy speaks of the 'raucous' voices of the station-porters. Wouldn't 'rough' be better here? He 'locates' his bunk on a steamer, instead of finding it. Another boy speaks of 'the first road which I encounter.' Why not 'meet' or 'come to'? All these words which I have quoted from the story are perfectly good words, but they seem to me a little out of place. I hope to say more on these points when I deal with 'the right word.'

I now come to Letter II, a description by a girl of 13 of a journey by car from London to Broadstairs.

Letter II

DEAR MOTHER AND FATHER,

I thought that you would like to know what the journey down to Broadstairs in the car was like. I met my friends in the car at Edgware Road. We went through Hyde Park and drove through a maze of streets, until at last we came to a place where the houses were gradually getting less and less, and then we came to the open road, bordered on each side by grass and hedges. Looking in front of me, I could see the road winding away in the distance, like a white ribbon, between fields of wheat, grass and sometimes ploughed land. As we drove past the fields I could get glimpses of poppies growing among the wheat, and cows and horses, and sheep grazing contentedly in the grass-fields, while the dark brown of the ploughed fields made a nice contrast to the green of the grass, and the golden-brown of the wheat.

Now and again the monotony of the road was broken by a few houses or an inn, and by a few cherry-sellers sitting by the wayside, or by the trees making an archway above our heads. The only sounds we heard were those made by the birds, or the occasional hooting of a passing car. We only stopped once on the way, and that was to buy some cherries. After passing through a few towns, and then on to the open road again, with only seeing perhaps a few people in the towns, and an 'A.A.'

LESSON V

The Writing of a 'Problem-Letter'

[I ended Lesson IV as follows: I now go on to the exercise for next time—a letter—but of a different kind from the last: what I call a 'problem-letter.' Of all the kinds of messages of which I spoke to you in my first talk, the letter is for most of us by far the most important. It may often happen that a person's whole future will depend on writing the right kind of letter at a given moment. The letters we wrote for this week's lesson were intended to interest or amuse the particular person to whom they were written. The kind of letter I now have in mind has a more definite object and a great deal, as I say, may depend on its failure or success. Many letters fail, not because the writer does not know what he wants to say—he may be bursting to say it—but because he has not done all the thinking that is needed before writing; because he has not thought out clearly what effect he wants to produce on the mind of the reader. Human beings are made so differently that we can never be certain beforehand of success. But if we don't face our problem squarely and try to succeed, we shall probably fail. We might almost as well fire at a target with our eyes shut and hope to hit the mark.

The 'problem-letter' I am going to set you is intended to illustrate my point. You are to suppose yourself the captain of a school team for cricket, hockey, net-ball, or tennis (any game you like); we will suppose that your name is Tom Smith[1] and that you have received this letter from one of the members of the club:

[1] If you are thinking of girls, call the captain of the team Jane Smith, and the writer, Mary White, and alter your genders accordingly.

in it. I want now to consider an element I haven't yet referred to. It is that you yourself are angry, justly angry, but *angry*. If I had received a letter like that I should certainly have been angry, and I dare say I should have said to myself, 'Oh, White is a silly fool,' or even a 'silly ass,' perhaps something worse. That, or a sentence like that, is all right for a 'record,' for the thing I say to myself. But would it be of any use in a 'message,' of which the object is to convince White that he hasn't been unfairly treated, and to make peace? I doubt it. I think it would just put White's back up.

I remember hearing that when George Eliot, the famous novelist, had to write a letter of that kind, she first of all wrote down everything she felt, just 'to blow off steam'; and then she tore up what she had written and began again.

A little while ago, one of you said that it might be much more effective not to tell the reader everything, but to let him put two and two together for himself. Can we use this hint, and make White put two and two together and come to the conclusion that he has been a 'silly ass' to suspect you of unfairness and to write that letter?

Of course it isn't easy and there is no general or perfect solution of a problem of this kind. Your letter must depend a good deal on what you know of White.

Now let us see how some of you boys and girls have tackled the problem. Here is a letter from a boy of about 13:

Letter I

DEAR WHITE,

I was much surprised, and hurt to receive your letter yesterday. You say that I omitted to include your name in the list for the important match on Wednesday against Sevenoaks, and accuse me of favouring another man and passing you over.

You and I, recently, have been engaged in a ridiculous quarrel, over some small matter or other, and this seems to me a

banished from my thought'? The phrase is correct, taken by itself, but is it correct here? Wouldn't you say, 'The very thing I tried to keep out of my mind'? Would you say, 'few others would *view their rejection* in the same spirit that you do'? Wouldn't you say, 'few others would *look on* their rejection in the same way that you do'? Would you say, '*retain* your friendship' or '*keep* your friendship'? All the phrases I have criticized would be right for another kind of audience, but a letter of this kind you want to keep as simple and natural as possible. If White thinks you are trying a piece of 'fine writing' on him, your letter will almost certainly fail. He may think that you aren't sincere although you are.

Here is a much shorter letter. I said that the letter might be long or short. [It is by a girl, aged 13, from Liverpool.]

Letter II

DEAR MARY,

I was very surprised when I read your note this morning. I did not think you would take it that way, as you are usually such a decent sort. I think it is rather unsporting of you to grumble. You do not think I did it for spite, do you? Such an idea never entered my head. All I did it for was the good of the school.

Yours,
JANE.

I wonder what you think of that. Mary wrote to Jane by way of allusion, not stating fully her grievance. Jane replies in the same way—but in her seventy-odd words I think she covers the ground.

I myself should be inclined to vote for A, because I think that Mary, being a 'decent sort,' might well be convinced by that simple statement. Do I think that Jane is wrong to suggest that Mary is *unsporting* to grumble? No, I think it is just the adjective that Mary might well expect after writing that hasty letter to Jane.

letter is the detailed explanation of reasons. White doesn't put the *grit into his work* that Hammond, the boy who replaced him, does. But how about this sentence, 'You are all out for self-glorification'? That hardly shows that Smith thinks White a 'good fellow.' And I'm a little doubtful about the end. At a guess, and not knowing White, I shouldn't give this letter more than a B. I doubt if it would succeed in its object, though it might.

Here is our last letter, by a girl of 13.

Letter IV

DEAR JOAN,

I am terribly sorry that you should have taken the attitude that you did towards my taking you out of the tennis final. This matter was nothing at all to do with the little misunderstanding we had. The one reason I had for taking your name off the list was that your service is not quite so good as that of the new player that I have in mind. The other members of the club quite understand that it is your service, and nothing else, that has caused you to be disappointed. If you study the matter closely I think you will come to the conclusion that I have done right.

Yours sincerely,

KATHLEEN.

I don't know so much about girls' letters as about boys', but this one seems to me on the whole natural, simple, and sincere. I do rather jib at the sentence beginning, 'If you study the matter closely.' How would it be to say, 'If you think over the matter, I think you will come to the conclusion that I have done right'? Some people would object to having these two words *think* so close together. I shouldn't myself, in this particular place, though I might in another place. And what is all-important is what Kathleen would feel about it. If there is only one word that is quite right, you need not mind repeating it.

One thing more. One girl thought that I meant that the letter received by the captain was an anonymous letter. I

CHAPTER VII

LATER EXPERIMENTS (WITH PUPILS OF 13 TO 14) —CONTINUED

LESSON VI

An Exercise in 'Balanced Judgment'

[One of the most difficult things in real life is to set out the pros and cons of a difficult question and to arrive at a conclusion. If, after thinking over such a matter carefully, we wish to convince others of the rightness of our conclusion so as to enable our conviction to be carried into action, we must state the reasons on which that conviction is based; and there can be no better discipline for the young writer than to ask him to go through this kind of process in dealing with a topic with which he is himself familiar.

I selected as the topic for my first exercise in balanced judgment, 'Ought athletics to be compulsory in schools?' And this is what I said to my class at the end of the preceding Lesson:

You are to write about 350 words (exclusive of the plan) in the form of a paper for a school debating society. The debating society is your *audience*, and your *object* will be to state clearly, as you see them, the advantages and disadvantages of making athletics compulsory in school—to give, as we say, the *pros* and the *cons* of the question. If you haven't thought much about this particular subject already, you should first write out rough notes of what you think about it in the form of a *record*, something written for yourself. Then you must make up your mind about the very important question of order.

Write out headings in the form of a short plan (which I shall want to see), a plan leading clearly up to your conclusion. Then you must bear in mind that in its final shape

have shown you some of the difficulties. What we want is what is called a 'balanced judgment.'

I have had exercises from Hitchin, and from Malton in Yorkshire, as well as from my London school, and they all show, as I expected, that the exercise was much harder to do well than the earlier ones.

The composition I shall discuss first is by a girl from Hitchin.

Composition I

There are many subjects taught in schools which are optional. Everyone cannot agree to let girls choose their sports for themselves.

I shall deal with the advantages of athletics being compulsory in schools first.

Athletics ought to be compulsory in schools. When you study the subject thoroughly and see all the good points gained from them I think you will agree with me. Children often find that they gain strength and are much healthier when they enter into athletics which help to develop the mind as well as the body.

Even if the children do not excel and shine as an outstanding feature in sports, if they try, it shows they have the sporting spirit which is needed in everything. If they lose a game and can take it in the proper way it shows they have learnt a lesson from sports.

A great deal of pleasure is derived from sports. When children are compelled to play they soon get into it, and then they find pleasure in it.

If practice is made compulsory children become skilful and then they enjoy their games.

On the other hand, for the sake of children's health, athletics should not be compulsory in schools, because some children are very weak and cannot stand the strain of sports, therefore they very often develop serious illnesses. If the children cannot do certain things in sport, they worry and brood over it which makes them look pale and miserable.

Play should be spontaneous and free. If [boys and girls are] forced to play, games become irksome, all interest is lost by the children, and they lose all idea of the sporting spirit which should be an outstanding characteristic of all athletics.

I now come to Composition II, by a boy of 13, in the form of a speech. The boys in his class are used to making speeches in the school debating society.

Composition II

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

For. I think that by making sports compulsory in schools we should be helping to make the British nation a finer and stronger race.

My first reason is that of physical development. When one is engaged in athletics it is very certain that in due course the limbs and muscles will become suppler and fitter to overcome the rush and strain of modern conditions.

This naturally leads to the health point of view. Sport is essentially an outdoor pastime, and the man or boy who leads an outdoor life is invariably the most fit, and when one is physically fit, the chances are that we enjoy good health. The mind is also largely cultivated by the alertness and judgment which sport promotes. The batsman or the tennis player has to decide which stroke he has to make 'a split second' after the ball has left his opponent. This is also a great help in after life.

The knowledge of trying to beat another side in a friendly game helps a boy or youth to play the game straightly.[1] He realizes when he is wrong to take defeat like a man, never arguing with the referee. He learns that to be a success he must become part of the team. He must be like a screw or wheel in the great clockwork of life.

Against. On the other hand a youth or boy would perhaps not be fond of sport and might be of a studious nature. It would therefore be a pity to disturb his preparation for a scholarship examination. In this, however, we come up against a difficulty. Many lazy boys disguise their laziness under the cloak of studying.

Then there are other boys who think of nothing but sport, and this interferes with their school work, and if sport were made

[1] He should have said 'to play a straight game.' According to Sir Pelham Warner, the greatest service rendered to this nation by cricket is the creation of the phrase 'It isn't cricket,' of which no literal translation into a foreign language is possible.

He says 'when one is *physically* fit the chances are that we enjoy *good health*.' But has he said just what he means? There isn't much difference between being 'physically fit' and being in 'good health.'

And there are some doubtful 'points of fact.' The author says that the mind is also largely cultivated by the alertness and judgment which sport promotes. I should like to believe that. But is there any proof of it? It is an easy thing to say, but it would be a difficult thing to prove. An alert judgment in dealing with a googly, or a ball just dropped over a tennis net, doesn't necessarily mean an alert judgment in dealing, for instance, with affairs of state. Jack Hobbs and Betty Nuthall were first-rate, the one in cricket and the other in tennis; but could we have predicted that they would have been equally good as Cabinet Ministers?

I come to another sentence: 'The knowledge of trying to beat another side in a friendly game helps a boy or youth to play the game straightly.' Buried in this short but obscure and not very correct sentence, there is a good idea. I haven't time to dig it out or to re-write the sentence. But I want you to feel that there is something that isn't clear.

[Some of the boys in my class thought I wanted two speeches, one on one side and one on the other. Here is a composition written in that way:]

Composition III

For—Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I am sure it would be beneficial to the schools if their athletics were made compulsory. At present there are many good athletes in the schools who do not come forward because of their shyness of publicity, but if the athletics were made compulsory, these boys would be forced to come forward and would therefore *do* something both for the benefit of the school and themselves. It would be physically beneficial to them and give them the exercise which they need after being cramped up at a desk all day. Sports give boys an alert brain, quick to decide what to do, and exercise judgment.

I should be inclined to say that sports should be made compulsory for most, but not for all, boys and girls, and to leave the school to decide what exceptions should be made to the general rule. I don't think heart-disease is so frequent as a great many of you seem to imagine, nor is it likely to be overlooked, but there may be other reasons for exemption. As some of you point out, the reasons for exemption might be different in a day school where a number of pupils come from a long distance, from those which apply to a boarding school. I think everybody would agree that sports are a good thing for the average boy and girl, if they are not overdone. And though I don't regard it as proved that they increase intelligence or alertness of decision in general, I do agree that team-work is a very good training for the character, and that it gives a valuable knowledge of human nature, which is as important to us as a knowledge of some school subjects.

I return to Composition III. I wonder why so many gave it an A. On reading it over again, I see that there is both something direct and something pleasant to listen to in the first half of the argument. There is one subtle but important element in composition which has been in my mind all along, but which there has been no time to discuss, I mean the element of sound. A composition may be *too smoothly* written. What happens? It tends to send you to sleep. And again it may be *too roughly* written, bringing you up sharp, as if against corners of sound. What happens? You think of the sound rather than the sense. How are we to learn the golden mean, to make the sound just fit the sense? Not, I suggest, by any rule, but only by experience and example. The author of Composition III shows something of the golden mean in the first part of his composition. I could easily show you how to spoil his work by cutting short some of his sentences and lengthening others, and so, I believe, could you, if you tried. What is odd is that the second part of his exercise doesn't show the qualities

By 'right,' do we mean legal right, or moral right? I think that the whole question shows that the proposer cannot mean me to discuss the question of legal right. If one has no legal right to a part of the money in one's possession, strictly speaking some of it belongs to someone else, although it is in one's possession for the moment. If I have in the bank twelve pounds (or twelve shillings), but I owe Government or a friend ten pounds (or ten shillings), there is only two pounds (or two shillings) of my own which I can spend freely. The question set then reduces itself to this: have I the moral right to spend my own money as I please? I have now to think of the question of duty as well as the question of pleasure.

It may be a duty to spend part of my money to help my parents or my brother, or sister, or people poorer than myself; perhaps some charity or hospital. If it is a pleasure to me to do that duty, so much the better. But, even if it isn't a pleasure, I suppose that a person should do his duty before thinking of his pleasure. May we not then say that a person has the right to spend his money as he pleases so as to give himself pleasure, if he can do so consistently with his duty? That is a general rule; but I must admit that its application may be difficult in particular cases. I have some duties to myself as well as to other people. I must take care of my health in order to keep efficient. It may be thought that I have the right to some pleasures, though I ought not to be extravagant. In every decision affecting the spending of my money, I must balance my duties to others against my duties to myself. But people who are brought up with a healthy sense both of duties to others and of the enjoyment of life, generally manage to reach a balance of this kind without being miserable or worrying too much.

[My class all voted for an A for that composition, but they had noticed that it was written on a different kind of paper from their own school paper and suspected that I might be the author. I was sorry for that. But I cross-examined them about that A. They said that they gave an A because the exercise was clear and logical. I continued:] I am trying it on you; it seems to me rather wanting in liveliness; there is too much precept and too

rates and the land-tax, according to the amount of his property. Now I want you to look at it in this way. If some people were left to spend all of their money as they pleased, you most likely will know by experience that they would never think of helping those who were placed in less fortunate positions than themselves. It is then, I think, essential that a portion of their money at least has to go [she means 'ought to go'] to help such schemes as the Unemployment and National Health schemes. This is, as we all know, taken advantage of in some cases, as most benefits of this kind are.

All these I have mentioned are compulsory by law, but there are certain duties a man may have to perform, such as supporting a sick relative; money has to be spent on them, but if he is allowed his choice he may choose to spend it in quite a different way. Also, if a man will [wishes to] be a dutiful citizen, there are obligations towards local appeals such as Church, Hospital, and charitable organizations from time to time.

Now, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think you will agree that all these things lead up to one point that—

A man has not the right to spend his money as he pleases.

I myself, considering the difficulty of the subject, should vote for A. The composition has not the abstract precision of Composition I; but it seems to me better written as a message, much more likely to interest a school debating society. And you could really dig out from it, if you tried, just that distinction between legal and moral right which is more clearly expressed in Composition I.

Now for a criticism. A number of the sentences in Composition II need what one may call 'straightening out.' Here is one which I take as an example:

'All these I have mentioned are compulsory by law, but there are certain other duties a man may have to perform, such as supporting a sick relative; money has to be spent on them, but if he was allowed his choice, he may choose to spend it in a different way.'

That sentence, to my mind, needs quite a lot of straighten-

benefit themselves. . . . They can enjoy themselves in the right way and not hurt their families.

Some people think that they should not spend their money as they like because some spend it very foolishly. Some gamble it [away] and get into debt and blacken their characters in the eyes of many. Others neglect their wives and families and spend the money all on themselves. Some do not save any and if misfortunes, such as illness or unemployment come their way, the country has to keep them. Another thing: if they do not save any money in early years they may be burdens to some others in later years. Some men spend needful money[1] on unnecessary things. I think that if the person is sensible and looks after his family properly he should be allowed to spend his money as he pleases.

[I said:] I should give that a B. There is a real effort to grapple with this difficult problem. But let us look at the ending.

'I think that if a person is sensible and looks after his family properly he should be allowed to spend his money as he pleases.'

The writer here, like many others, has got into the tangle between legal and moral right which the author of Composition II avoided.

One of you got out of the difficulty by setting himself a problem which he thought he could solve, though it wasn't the one set. Here is his composition, with a 'conclusion' by the author, which I imagine he puts into the mouth of the chairman of the debating society.

Composition IV

Should a boy be allowed to spend money as he wishes?

Mr. A's speech

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

One of the most important essentials of business training is early experience in financial matters. It is a great pity if a boy

[1] She means 'money really needed for important things.'

[Some of the boys who voted for B in the class criticized certain phrases as unsuited to a boys' debating society. And there was a discussion as to the meaning of 'moral aspect,' of which we had spoken earlier.

'Profligate spending' was condemned by nearly everyone; and we had various meanings given to it. One boy said it was 'wanton spending,' another 'extravagant spending,' another 'reckless spending—in a wrong direction,' which I think is a fair definition. I myself should have used 'extravagant.' I think they all knew what the author meant, but the phrase 'profligate spending' seemed a little grand.

One further criticism was of the sentence, 'Mr. A's case appears to me the more impressive, and *likelier* to be carried out.' What did the author mean by saying, 'the case is *likelier* to be carried out'? One has to guess. You can't speak of 'carrying out a case.' I said that I should call that sentence 'muddled,' or 'slipshod' if you like, whereas nearly all the rest of the author's work was written in clean and tidy English.

At the end of the Lesson, I said that I would fulfil a promise that I had made at the beginning of the course—to speak briefly about writing in examinations. I continued:]

In the examination-room you have a peculiar kind of audience and object, quite different from any other. You are often asked to tell a person in writing what he already knows, a ridiculous thing to do anywhere else than in an examination-room. Your object isn't to instruct the examiner but to let him know that *you* know the answers to his questions, and as you are often pressed for time, you have to condense your answers as much as you can, provided that you make your own meaning clear to him. What it would be absurd to assume if you were writing for an uninstructed audience, you can assume safely with the examiner. *He* will have no doubts about the 'moral aspect' or 'profligate spending.' If your only or chief training in writing is writing for an examiner, the person who knows already what

that the unit in writing is *the composition as a whole*; that we must try always to judge whether it succeeds or whether it fails *as a whole* in achieving its object. That is more important than what I have to say to-day on 'the right word.'

A composition is often compared to a building with a definite plan. The comparison is not exact—comparisons rarely are—but if we use it, we may liken the words to bricks or stones.[1]

In a building some bricks or stones are structural. Take them away and the building falls. Some are only ornamental. The same may be said of the words in a composition. But in judging both of the structural and of the ornamental elements of a building we must always keep in mind the purpose of the building as a whole, though many buildings, and many elements in a building, have, of course, common purposes. But you can see at once that different kinds of construction will be required for, say, (1) a fives-court without a roof, (2) a barn, (3) a farm-house, (4) a church, and (5) a theatre; and different words are often needed to say the same *kind* of thing for compositions with different audiences and different objects in view. And that was why I set you, just as before, an exercise with a special audience and object in view, though my principal object to-day is to

[1] Dr. Richards, in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, pp. 9–10, expresses the strongest objection to likening words to bricks, for the perfectly sound reason that meanings of words influence one another, and that bricks don't. Nevertheless, I leave the text of my lesson unaltered, with my original warning that the comparison was not exact, and that hardly any comparisons are exact. Few people would be willing to abandon the metaphor (if it has not ceased to be a metaphor) of treating a piece of writing for some purposes as a structure; for other purposes, as I have explained, it should be regarded as an arrow required to hit a mark. I have always taught that when we use the term 'the right word' we only mean 'the right word' to carry out the particular intentions of the writer or speaker in his whole context of words and circumstances. Each writer has his own right to choose his own metaphors, and each reader has the right, if he pleases, to regard the judgment of the writer as bad if the metaphor intended to influence him fails in its purpose. I am no 'respecter of authority' in this matter. I may try to persuade, but dictation may be absurd; and some critics most sure of themselves seem to me on this matter to make the worst of blunders. I don't ask them to agree with me.

noise of the hammer striking the anvil, and the deep vibration of the anvil, clanging like a bell.[1]

We haven't finished with 'clanging' yet. One boy had written that his hero 'was just dropping off to sleep when all of a sudden the clangour of the alarm-bell was heard.' Was 'clangour' the right word to use here? Even if the bell was an ordinary and not an electric one? No, said one critic, it wasn't. 'Clangour' is a long-continued clanging, not a sudden sound; and we thought he was right. We all agreed on one point—that you would speak either of the 'clanging' or the 'clangour' of the big bell on the fire-engine itself as it goes roaring along the road or street to a fire.[2]

I then took the following beginning of another exercise, and asked the class for their opinion.

'It was about twelve o'clock as I lay in my bed one night. I was wakened by some smoke in the room. Was the house on fire, or was the smell coming from the outside? I lay still for a few minutes wondering what to do and then I came to the conclusion that I would wake up my mother and father who slept in the adjoining room.'

They made this criticism. 'I came to the conclusion' is too long here. 'Decided'? Yes—*decided.* Much sharper and better. Though 'I came to the conclusion' is quite a good phrase, we all felt that here it wasn't the right one and that 'decided' was.

Another point: Tom, a fireman, discovers 'a huddled heap' in an almost burnt-out room. 'He picked up the huddled heap and found it to be a baby.' We had a lot of discussion about that. The class didn't like the expression

[1] W. Watson's *Textbook on Physics* (p. 365) defines the difference between a 'noise' and a musical note as follows:

'Sounds which affect our ear are divided into two classes. One of these consists of short sounds which last only for a short time, or, if they last for any length of time, are continually changing their character, and are called noises. The other class consists of sounds the character of which is that the vibrations by which they are caused are periodic; these are called musical notes.'

[2] The *Shorter O.E.D.* defines *clang* and also *clangour* as a 'loud, resonant, ringing sound.'

are stopped instead of being carried on, as the reader ought to be. The class agreed. And it was again generally agreed that we ought, wherever possible, to avoid using twice any important word likely to excite attention, in places near together. Repetition, of course, doesn't matter with little words like 'the' and 'to' and 'that,' which don't excite attention. But a word like 'rush' brings a picture to your mind, and does excite attention. How can we get over the difficulty? The class suggested—'Ted rushed to the ladder and began to descend. When he reached the ground the baby's mother ran up to Ted and clasped her child.' Perhaps we might have made Ted *run* or *race* to the ladder and left the baby's mother to *rush* up to Ted. That might have been even better. We saw that, while by the change we had avoided the repetition, we had sacrificed nothing essential. If there is only one right word to use in a given context—and there may be sometimes—why, we must just leave the repetition. We must never sacrifice the sense.

We dealt with one other example of repetition. One author said 'the alarming sound of an alarm-bell rang in our ears.' But not a single voice was raised in defence of this double use of alarm.

Next came a story of a somewhat different kind, *à la* Edgar Wallace, called 'The Hero.'

'He was a man who looked a typical hero with a keen, bronzed face, broad square shoulders, dark wavy hair and keen blue eyes. He also had an air about him that gave him the suggestion of an old mythical hero.'

Objections at once. 'The air about him' didn't give *him* the suggestion of an old mythical hero, it gave the suggestion to other people. Quite right. What shall we say, then? How about leaving out the second 'him,' purely and simply? We proposed, 'He also had an air about him that gave the suggestion of an old mythical hero.' Later, this hero, who performs astonishing deeds of valour (though

something that would have been said both suddenly and loud. But we may have been wrong. Just a matter of taste.

I continued the story: 'Reaching the hall we found that one side was a fiery maelstrom in which the big central stairs were involved.' Many hands were held up. The first objection was that you don't have *central* stairs, that is, stairs in the middle of the hall. But we overruled that objection. A big staircase that is placed on the middle line of a great hall, even though it is nearer one end than the other, might be called the central staircase. Then we came to the phrase 'fiery maelstrom.' [1] Many objected to that. We asked the author what the *maelstrom* meant. He said, quite rightly, that it was a whirlpool off the coast of Norway. Well, said many objectors, maelstrom is a whirlpool of water. Could you talk of a whirlpool of fire? I told my class how I had once had the extraordinary chance of standing on the thick walls of a great reservoir in Paris, and of looking down into a burning wood-yard, abutting against one of the walls (*not* the particular wall I was standing on), and seeing from time to time the flames in one part turning round and round as the water does in a whirlpool. I had seen a real whirlpool (Charybdis), though I hadn't seen the Maelstrom. So I backed up the author. Then we had another criticism, this time from an Inspector of the Board of Education who had looked in and was sitting at the back of the room, a very nice inspector, rather solemn-looking at first, but with a twinkle in his eye, which made us forget that he was an inspector; we none of us minded his being there a bit. He said his idea of a whirlpool was of a current that sucked things under, and he couldn't reconcile that with the uprush of air and flame in a fire. But afterwards he gave up his objection; he thought that the word 'maelstrom' did give us a picture of what mattered most—that whirling of flame that you see sometimes in a big fire.]

[1] We all understood, I think, that the word might be used figuratively.

CHAPTER VIII

LATER EXPERIMENTS (WITH PUPILS OF 16 TO 18)

Introduction

In Chapter III I described experiments with pupils of 11–13,[1] and in Chapters V–VII experiments with pupils of whom the majority were about 14. In the present chapter I deal with experiments made with boys of 16 to 18 who had all passed the School Certificate examination.[2]

The experiments were conducted, by the courtesy of the headmasters, in two London schools: (1) a public school, School I, founded in the nineteenth century, with a long record of pupils who have achieved high distinction; (2) a school, School II, founded early in the seventeenth century, and originally, no doubt, of the 'grammar school' type, whose boys have also achieved considerable distinction. All the pupils had passed the School Certificate examination. Each school has several hundred pupils, and the best in the highest classes were preparing for University scholarship examinations.

My comments on the compositions which follow are of two kinds—(i) general comments dealing with points of major importance, and (ii) corrections and suggestions of detail, given either between brackets as insertions in the text or in the form of footnotes. As I have stated in Chapter III, in reading aloud a composition for the judgment of a class I frequently make minor corrections of the latter kind so as not to divert the attention of the audience

[1] And also experiments with working men.

[2] There is a gap between the ages of the pupils dealt with in Chapters V–VII and those dealt with in the present one. It is filled in, in part, by the experiments made by my colleagues and myself recorded in *The Marking of English Essays*. The main object of that investigation was to test examiners, and not examinees. But the final series of recommendations which we made relate to questions of teaching as well as to questions of examining pupils of 'School Certificate age,' and I have reprinted them at the end of Chapter IX.

of a 'balanced judgment' discussed with younger pupils in Chapter VII (Lessons VI and VII) above. Such self-criticism is a characteristic probably not too common in writers of this age. And it was quite clear to me when I discussed the compositions with the class after I had marked them, that their teacher had not attempted to impose his own opinions on his pupils in matters on which they had a right to opinions of their own.

The distribution of my own marks for the 32 compositions, which were allotted chiefly for 'sense' in the way specified in the Summary of Recommendations at the end of Chapter IX, para. (3), was as follows:

A+	A	A−	B+	B	B−	C+	C	C−
2	2	3	8	10	4	2	1	0

I did not alter my marks in any way to try to secure conformity with what is called the 'normal distribution' by statisticians.

I have selected for reproduction the five essays which seemed to me the best. The whole sample is too small for one to be able to say whether the opinions expressed on this difficult subject are characteristic of English boys during these critical years.

The address was given in the correct form and place in nearly all the letters, but it has been omitted from my text.

Composition I

29 *May*, 1942.

DEAR FRANK,

You asked me in your last letter to tell you whether English people consider England the best country in the world, in the same way as Americans think their country to be [the] best. I will do my best to tell you the answer to this question—I must confess I can only offer you my own opinion—but I can assure you straightaway that there is no definite 'yes' or 'no' answer to the problem. I shall, therefore, show you in what respects I believe England to be the best nation, and in what

honestly say that we are better than these fine brave peoples? No doubt these countries are behind us in many ways; the number of Chinese existing on a reasonable standard of living, or the number of Russians who have any of what we nowadays call 'culture,' although nowadays coming rapidly on the upgrade (in spite of many almost unconquerable difficulties, perhaps the greatest of all being the variations of the basic language, almost unrecognizably different from the 'standard' tongue of the grammar book), is still unfortunately very small when compared with the number of the population of the nation as a whole; but nevertheless we must not forget their undying courage, in sacrificing their lives, their homes, and, indeed all that they lived for—their farms and all the engineering and scientific improvements made to give their country that 'culture,' which their enemies, possessors only of 'Kultur,' took from them in brutal fashion.

I have already considered some rather obvious ways in which England may be rightly extolled above her fellow-nations. There are, however, many subtle ways in which England shows itself [? herself] to be the most progressive nation in the world. One such way is language itself. A comparison between this and an ancient 'Romance'[1] language, or the present language of the more culturally backward nations of Europe, to take as examples Latin and Greek, and Russian and Polish, at once shows a very important difference; and the 'modernness' of English is rapidly seen by its absence of inflections, simplifications of 'genders,' possession of a definite and an indefinite article, and its ability to be speeded up in conversation, [as in] the saying of 'don't' for 'do not.' And one must not forget the interesting fact, that, although English possesses the largest stock of words of any language in the world, in everyday life English-speaking peoples use one of the smallest vocabularies of any 'modern' language [?], making one word do the work of three or four [others].[2]

These facts only go to prove that England holds a tremendous sway over the world of to-day. Respected and admired by friend and foe alike,[3] she may well be true to the words of Mr. Eden,

[1] The writer is obviously unaware that the name 'Romance languages' is limited to those derived from Latin.

[2] That is true of other languages, e.g. French.

[3] Were the Nazis and Fascists of this opinion?

[? in reading it]. I was very [? much] interested in your excellent descriptions of American modes of living and customs, but what interested me most was your statement that the average American believes his own country to be the best in the world.

You ask me whether I think myself, that England is superior to any other country in the world. In asking me that, you have been most inconsiderate, and forced me into a long bout of intense thought, which has left me rather weak at the knees, and badly in need of a pick-me-up!

Before I start to give you all the hundred and one reasons why I think it is or it isn't the best country in the world, I should like you to know that having never been out of England, I have no grounds whatever on which to prove my points. Therefore I shall have to base all my reasons on second-hand knowledge—on what I have heard rumoured, etc. But the whole point is [that] whether I can think of any reasons or no, I nevertheless, probably by instinct, believe that there is no country better than my own, and I should therefore say that it would be unnatural for anyone to think otherwise than from this point of view.[1]

When I think of the climate that we put up with in this island of ours, the rain in the summer, fogs and mists in winter, and I might almost say the apologies of winter and summer with which we are presented, I sometimes wonder from what springs my affection for my homeland. When I think of the scenery—the large towns, absence of open spaces [?]—it makes me wonder from what springs the inspiration of the Englishman. Some people would like to say the sea, that the sea is in our blood—but then I will wager that 40 per cent. of the population of England have never seen the sea, let alone have it in their blood.

I might ask myself why I prefer England to America. True, we drive our cars down the left-hand side of the road and you Americans drive your cars down the right-hand side of the road, but in what other ways do we differ so colossally that I should have a good reason for preferring to be the product of one rather than the other? You play baseball in summer time and we play cricket—which is the better game? It is what you have been brought up to that you have the best liking for. Therefore we like our early morning cups of tea, our nobility, our jumble-sales

[1] The last six words would be better omitted.

made a poor show at it; however you have learnt something (or at least I have), that in my case, and if the truth were known, in most people's, it is not a question of producing credible reasons, but just a matter of instinct and nothing else. If I had been born an Italian—well I should think that Italy was the greatest of the great, and if I had been born a German, I should probably be a budding Nazi, and friend Adolf would be my hero.

Well, I must stop now; once again many thanks for your letter, and all the news. I hope to be hearing from you again in the near future. Give my love to your father and mother,

and all the best to you,

from DAVID.

My note was 'Very sensible and skilfully written. He has a light touch.' I gave the mark A+.

Composition III

29 *May*, 1942.

DEAR MARTIN,

I received your letter yesterday and am replying as quickly as possible for I know how long these letters take to get across the Atlantic, your last letter [having been] delayed nearly two months. I notice you mention that the Americans think their country the best in the world and ask me if I think the same of England. Well, of course! Everyone thinks his country the best. The feeling of patriotism is prevalent in all countries, though this should not prevent us from recognizing that other peoples have their good qualities as well. The one thing we must avoid is unjustifiable pride and self-righteousness. You are certainly justified in thinking America one of the best countries in the world, but I would contest the statement that it is the best. In some respects it may be better than England, but the converse also holds true. Besides, people's ideas on what constitutes a 'good country' differ a great deal. Many Americans would, no doubt, dislike living in England, and *vice versa*. Perhaps America is the best country for Americans. You certainly have a glorious, though brief, history. Ever since the Pilgrim Fathers settled on the shores of what is now the 'United States of America' your country has been famous for its love of liberty and for its toler-

that the whole world will be more democratic after this war!

Greetings to your family, and please write to me again soon.

Best wishes,

ALAN.

My note was 'Sensible and good as a letter.' I gave the mark A—.

Composition IV

29 *May*, 1942.

DEAR GEORGE,

Yes, of course they do. And, in the same way to the French there is no country like France, to the Germans no country like Germany, and, probably, to the Fijians, Fiji is 'God's Own Country.' In fact the assumption that one's own country is the best in the world is so general that I wonder at your asking the question. Is it possible that you have some doubts as to whether the opinion of your American friends is justified, or do you think that millions of Englishmen are silently pining for the wide open spaces of Texas or Arizona? I feel sure they are not, in spite of film propaganda and their instinctive [?] adoption of the American idiom.

But it is easy to generalize and, on thinking it over, I realize that I haven't the least idea whether an unemployed miner or a skilled workman who had lived on the dole for years before the war in a 'distressed area,' really thinks that England is the finest country in the world. Did you ever see in America the English film 'Love on the Dole'? I feel sure you did and you will, I think, agree with me that the boy in that film, who had never been out of his filthy industrial slum because he couldn't afford to pay a train-fare, might not be very enthusiastic about England. But I have also seen 'The Grapes of Wrath' which portrays America in no better light.

Perhaps, as I can give you no true picture of the feelings of Englishmen generally about England, I had better tell you what I myself think. I think that England is the best country in the world, and by that I do not mean that England is superior to all other countries morally, politically or physically, but that I would rather live in England than anywhere else. It is rather difficult to explain why I think so without becoming sentimental

sufficient to account for my very definite bias in favour of England.

What does account for it? Something, I think, far less tangible than the things I have mentioned, yet of which they all form a part—the English way of life. You will say that I prefer it because I have grown up in it and you may be right, but, as I have seen it so far, it is a very pleasant way of life. It is casual and friendly, fulfilling the Greek ideal of 'nothing too much.' It avoids extremes of thought or action by the world-renowned English love of compromise and by the tendency in English thought and speech to ironic 'meiosis.'[1] Of the essentials of freedom, we have emphasized liberty until it has become the basis of our way of life, but even that does not run to extremes because of our recognition of the fact that liberty must be restricted to allow a similar liberty to the man next door.

Out of all this has risen the English tradition—a rather romantic tradition dependent largely upon our literature. It may not even be true [? intelligible] to a foreigner, but it is inherent in the English, and, when it is not exploited by scoundrels and twisted to the ends of extreme nationalism, it makes for a way of living that I think the best in the world.

When you have read this, get a copy of Rupert Brooke's poems and read 'The Old Vicarage, Grantchester,' which, I think, contains what I have been trying to say. I shall be interested to know how it affects you. If you like it very much, I shall be inclined to think there is something objective in my preference for the English way of life, but, if, as I expect, you do not appreciate it I shall become reconciled to the fact that I like England and England's ways simply because I am English and therefore incurable.

Yet
Stands the Church clock at ten to three?
And is there honey still for tea?

If these things do not matter to you, George—and I am sure they don't—you are beyond redemption.

Yours,
TONY.

[1] i.e. understatement.

cated to hold, and to believe as his own, the opinions of his grandfathers. All this because his education leaves him ignorant of world conditions.

His country may actually be the greatest in the world in all respects, but who can judge on such a subject? But it is certainly not perfect, and consequently needs a great deal of improving.

I am not, most emphatically not, saying that only in England do such conditions exist, nor that the Englishman is the only one whose environment and whose education forbid the emancipation of his thoughts. No, every single country and every single 'patriot' suffers at the hands of the same disease. Yes, patriotism, or rather nationalism, is a disease. A disease brought about by those germ-carriers, tradition and education.

That calls for explanation. When there are three men, with only food enough for two, the three fight each other for the food, soon to discover the easiest way. Namely, the two strongest combine to defeat the weakest. Thus individuals combine to form groups, groups to [form] classes, classes to [form] societies, societies to [form] nations, always to be stronger than their opponents in the quest for food. Curiously enough nations do not combine to form a single human community, which, with the aid of science, could then produce enough food for all.

But, being human, we stop and fight each other for what food there is. Although statesmen make us think so by wielding the weapons of tradition and education (for how else could they induce one peace-loving citizen to fight another equally peace-loving citizen of another nation?), nations do not fight each other because they dislike one another. No, they fight because it is an economic necessity. Because of economic necessity that need not be a necessity. If we could only overcome the opposition of our traditions and become one single human community, if we could just make that most logical step in human progress, then we should have advanced nearer to our eventual goal of human prosperity and happiness.

That is the task which we of the younger generation, we who have hardly known the old world, must face. It is a task more difficult than any yet attempted by any single generation; it is a task for which we must use every capacity of our minds; it is a task for which we must consider the advice of our elders, without

I have selected the examples printed below, and, as before, I have appended my own notes on them.

Composition VI

Letter to a French friend

Every aspect of English life seems to me to reflect the importance of the ordinary man. And I am an ordinary person. There, I think, you have the reason why I would sooner be an Englishman than an inhabitant of any other country in the world.

Did you notice the houses, buildings and streets when we were at Bath the last time you visited me? You probably thought they compared very unfavourably with the fine vistas, the imposing avenues, the boulevards and the monumental groupings of your own Paris; and what has England to match the magnificent palace of Versailles [?], you doubtless asked. Yet it is precisely the calm reticence and the urbanity of our towns which appeals [appeal] to me. I like to think of them as built for no other purpose than to house free citizens as comfortably and pleasantly as possible. To me they are not monuments or material glorifications of the power of princes, or of famous men, like many of the grand buildings in continental countries, but homes for ordinary people.

The same character is apparent in our countryside too, I think. We have no avenues so characteristic of your grand French style. Yet the simple expedient of defining boundaries by planting hedgerows and embellishing them with trees which have been allowed to grow to full maturity, has given the English landscape a friendly, human air, and at the same time has avoided that depressing bareness which is seen in Northern France sometimes.

Do you remember that little café in Montmartre where we had that delightful meal? How I enthused over the delicacy and subtlety of French cooking. Yet it is a surprising fact that on my return to England I could hardly contain my excitement as I beheld one of those dinners of roast mutton and baked potatoes which my grandmother cooks so well. It was just a good, solid, ordinary meal, but at that moment I would not have exchanged it for any other meal in the world. You will probably laugh at this, as you laughed when I told you that one of my greatest joys

been conquered, you still have a greater love for your own country than any other, and I thought that I would now tell you the reasons why I like England in preference to[1] your own or any other country.

I should think that one of the main reasons hangs on[2] the fact that our country is an island and that even though we have been conquered several times, throughout we have not driven out our conquerors but, owing to our insular position, have absorbed them.

Perhaps another reason, which appeals especially to me, is the great variety of scenery which one can find in a comparatively small space. I know that this does occur in your country but I do not think to such a great extent as here.

Yet another reason is furnished by our large towns. I do not mind admitting that many of them are large, straggling and extremely ugly on the whole, but individual buildings are often extraordinarily beautiful. I think that at evening, London's ugliness can become exceedingly attractive. There is also in London the feeling that it is the hub of the universe and also the feeling of all the events which have gone before, right from Anglo-Saxon times, which have combined to build the London we now know.

There is also the feeling of Liberty for all classes of people. 'A land where, girt with friends or foes, a man may speak the things he will.' This liberty extends right beyond the political standpoint,[3] into the private life of every individual. That is the reason that England produces so many people who are slightly eccentric in minor matters, perhaps their clothes or food. This does not mean that the class barrier has been broken down but that all the legislation of the last twenty years has been in the direction of giving increased opportunities for all, rich and poor alike, to rise.

I had better stop now or you will begin to think that I am growing sentimental.

Yours sincerely,

H.

[1] The writer means 'Why I prefer England to.'

[2] For 'hangs on' I should substitute 'depends on.' The metaphor 'hangs' retains too much of its original sense in my judgment to be appropriate here. The idea of the writer might be expressed more simply by saying, 'One of the main reasons is that our country is an island.'

[3] I should substitute 'sphere' as a more appropriate metaphor in this place than 'standpoint.'

The essence of all pleasure in childhood and youthful days is sport. Without this sport no pleasure, no relaxation, no recreation would be provided and, as the proverb says, 'All play, no work, makes Jack a dull boy.'[1]

Though generally sport must be considered a duty, those who participate in sport think of it mainly as a pleasure. This however does not argue that sport for many is a pleasure only.

Above all, although the sportsmen and sportswomen do not realize it, perhaps sport is a duty which combines in it [itself] pleasure and relaxation.

My note was 'This speech would certainly leave the hearers in a state of confusion. The author has involved himself in unnecessary difficulties by introducing the word "sports" as the equivalent of "games"; and he has not distinguished between taking part in a game and being an onlooker; horse-racing is a sport but not a game. In the third paragraph he writes, "If games were looked upon as a pleasure, then children who did not enjoy games would not take part in them." One can guess what the author meant; he has not said it. In the fourth paragraph he writes, "The essence of all pleasure in childhood and youthful days is sport." Can the pleasure of eating plum-pudding, or of listening to music, be called "sport"? The whole speech needs re-writing.'

I marked the composition B, although if the writer had taken more trouble he might easily have deserved an A. He has ideas, but has not learnt to analyse and arrange them.

Composition IX

Speech for a Debating Society:

Should games be regarded as a duty or as a pleasure?

The open air, fresh smell of mown grass, swish of a ball, smack of a clean catch, swing of muscular bodies, seem so superior in their natural cleanness to the comparative insidious corruption[2] of everyday life that the word pleasure, now reminiscent of

[1] The correct form of the proverb is 'All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.'

[2] Does the author mean 'in comparison with the insidious corruption'?

my opinion there is nothing more pathetic and desultory[1] than the sight of loose flesh where there should be firm muscle, and an ungainly unbalanced body where there should be symmetry and beauty.

As for those to whom compulsory games are an unpleasant duty, the least they can do is to look upon the football field as they would a dose of castor oil—unpleasant perhaps, but for their own good.

My note was 'The details of this speech are much better than its plan. If the author had begun by criticizing the form of the question which he was asked to answer, all his detailed arguments might have fallen neatly into place, and the speech would have had a clearness and a unity which it lacks. I should have liked to ask him to re-write his speech with these criticisms in mind.' I gave the mark A— or B+.

Composition X

Speech for a Debating Society:

Should games be regarded as a duty or as a pleasure?

Games should be regarded as a duty and games should be regarded as a pleasure. That may seem rather a bold statement to start with but if I modify it, it will bring out my point. Games are[2] a duty to your physical healthiness and are[2] a pleasure to your mental faculties.

First let us give 'games' its full meaning. Games are a physical or mental contest, conducted according to set rules and undertaken for amusement or recreation, or for winning a stake. Games of chance, such as dice and most card games, are not a duty and need not be a pleasure; but games of skill, or those in which skill is the sole or a considerable factor in determining the outcome, are those to which I refer in my opening sentence. Chess, whist, draughts and billiards are mental recreations and

[1] 'Desultory' seems to be a 'malapropism.' I don't know what the author means.

[2] The context shows that for 'are,' in both places, in order to express his own view, he should have written 'may be.' He says, later, 'games of chance . . . are not a duty and need not be a pleasure.' He has not taken the trouble to analyse his own ideas.

games, every facility should be made to please and satisfy them in their pursuits.

For those who are quite bored with games activities, there should be no obligation to play them. This statement may appear rather sweeping, but it can be readily substantiated. If games are made a duty there is no relaxation from work, which, I repeat, is the principal idea behind [?] their origin. To make a person play [? take part in] organized sports for the sake of his community is unwise if he has no wish to participate. The person who is unwilling to play with a mob of grimy-faced individuals, who are half intoxicated with the fervour of the proceedings, does no good whatsoever if he is forced to enter a game. On the contrary, he would definitely hinder his fellows, and although it may [might] not be done purposely, his actions in the sport, if any, would do little or nothing to heighten the prestige of his community.

It can be argued that games should be made a duty as such exercise is necessary for physical fitness. This brings in a further argument, but it would be best to assume that a certain amount of exercise is necessary, although not as much as some people seem to think. But, there are other methods of exercising, besides joining in a game with others, such ways being walking, running across country, or even cycling, although to most people the latter is merely a quick way of cheap transport. Organized physical exercises in a gymnasium can hardly be placed with either party.[1] Even if the person should take no exercise at all, he is the only one to suffer, and the games-loving class is too much in predominance to allow the general standard of health to drop.

Finally to uphold the argument against making games a duty, [? we may say that] it is not right to organize games for the purpose of discipline. Sufficient discipline is found in a well-run establishment without disguising more discipline under the attractive name of 'games,' and furthermore if a person is forced against his will to play games, why should not a person who likes games be forbidden to play them for the sake of discipline?

Therefore games should [be] made a pleasure, if possible, but if no pleasure is derived from them, it is very unwise to make them a duty.

[1] What does 'party' mean here?

CHAPTER IX

ENGLISH COMPOSITION AT THE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORMS IN THE METHODS OF TEACHING AND OF EXAMINING PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE AGE

1. The 'First' School Certificate examinations, taken generally between the ages of 16 and 17, and those matriculation examinations for which they so often serve as an equivalent, formally guard the portals of almost every professional career in England and Wales, and, though without formal sanction, the entry to business careers for many thousands of young men and women each year. At any rate they did so before 1939.

Incontestable evidence has been given in Chapter I of the failure of our secondary schools to secure for their pupils an adequate mastery of the mother tongue. We may therefore ask to what extent the numbers of 'passes' at the School Certificate examination reflect this failure.

The following are the statistics of passes for the midsummer examinations of the years 1931–1938. They are quoted from the Annual Reports of the Board of Education entitled *Education in 1931*, etc.

	Total number of candidates.	*Obtained certificates.*	*Percentage of passes.*	*Page of Report referred to.*
1931	66,901	46,301	69·2	—
1932	69,343	48,540	70·0	—
1933	68,406	48,047	70·2	—
1934	66,410	47,616	71·7	—
1935	70,183	51,283	73·0	51
1936	76,856	54,743	71·2	26
1937	77,278	54,795	70·9	26
1938	77,010	54,850	71·2	18

devices to achieve the results required and to avoid a distressing number of failures. The story of this well-intentioned manipulation is described in the important Report of the Panel of Investigators presided over by Dr. (now Sir) Cyril Norwood, which was appointed to inquire into the eight approved School Certificate examinations held in the summer of 1931.[1] The Investigators 'found much evidence that at present certificates may be granted to candidates whose English is lamentably weak.' Yet at that examination more pupils were reported to have passed in English than in any other subject, 86·2 per cent. of the total, the figure varying for the different Examining Bodies from 78·6 to 93·1 per cent.

The Investigators also commented on the remarkable methods employed in other subjects in order to achieve the results desired. In English, with which I am alone here concerned, the 'standard' for a pass has obviously been very low; and we have had no further official publication on the methods employed since 1931. We only know that the results of the teaching have continued to produce great dissatisfaction.

The change of regulations which came fully into effect in 1940 was a reform from which valuable results may have been effected; but there is no evidence of what has actually happened.

Although some of the 'essay' subjects are as absurd as before, much ingenuity has been shown by some of the Examining Bodies in devising tests requiring shorter answers.

It might be thought that I blame the Examining Bodies for their procedure. On the contrary, as I have said before, they preferred the farce of passing incompetent candidates to the tragedy of ploughing them; and, I believe, rightly. But that is no reason why the farce should continue. The remedy lies in a reform of the teaching such as I have

[1] *The School Certificate Examination*, etc. (H.M. Stationery Office, 1932, 2*s.* 6*d.*).

marking of a large number of scripts, to secure a maximum of consistency between the markings of eight competent examiners, all of whom had acted for one or more of the approved Examining Bodies, and all of whom were at the time actually serving on the panels of one or more of these authorities.

After preliminary trials they marked independently identical copies of six hundred different scripts. In many instances their marks differed greatly. What is even more significant is that when the same examiners, after an interval of five months, each marked 120 of the scripts for a second time, there were in many instances considerable differences between the marks allotted by the same examiners to the same script on the two occasions. No process of 'standardization' could remove such uncertainties. It conceals them.

I should also mention that my Committee came to the conclusion, on the basis of the evidence, that the term 'literacy' as applied to work of this kind has no meaning sufficiently well recognized to be effectively used in judging the scripts of the candidates.

For other details of the investigation reference must be made to *The Marking of English Essays*. I subjoin here the summary of our practical recommendations relating to teaching as well as to examinations.

Summary of Recommendations

With a view to the improvement of the teaching of the mother tongue in our schools and the examinations in this subject which at present so vitally affect the teaching, we make the following recommendations:

(1) That the practice of asking pupils from the age of 13 and upwards to write 'compositions' termed 'essays' be abandoned; and that they be asked instead to write compositions on subjects about which they may reasonably be expected to have a fund of ideas and a sufficient knowledge which they could express for a

be invited (*a*) to test the self-consistency of their examiners by requesting them at the end of an examination to re-mark, say, 25 or 50 of the scripts which they had marked originally, all marks on those scripts (including the original numbers) having been removed; or, as an alternative, that they be asked to mark typed copies of the originals; (*b*) to test the general consistency of the marking of the different examiners by assigning to them for re-marking at the end of an examination a set of 25 or 50 typed copies of the original scripts; and that one or more sets of scripts be assembled for this purpose, each set being composed of scripts which had been originally assigned to a number of different examiners.

(8) That in order to test the real significance of the awards, such as Pass, Credit, etc., for English Composition given by School Certificate examination authorities each such authority be requested to submit, at intervals to be determined, for the information of the Board of Education, through the Secondary School Examinations Council, six specimens of compositions to which the borderline mark for each of such awards has been finally assigned; and that such scripts be selected by the Secondary School Examinations Council by the inspection not of the scripts but of a numbered list of the candidates to whom borderline marks have been allotted.

(9) That for a period to be determined, the demand to write a composition exceeding (say) 200 words in length be omitted from School Certificate examinations; and that this restriction should not involve a corresponding restriction in the teaching of English composition, which should always have ample time definitely allotted to it in the school time-table, distinct from that allotted to other branches of English, such as grammar and literature.

(10) That in School Certificate examinations the use of précis be extended to passages of not less than 1,000 words; and that the candidates be required to make a précis of such passages not exceeding one-sixth of the length of the original; and further that the object of the précis be defined as a statement of what the candidate regards as the main points in the original passage for the benefit of a person who has not the time or opportunity to read that passage for himself.

CHAPTER X

SKETCH OF THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF THE TEACHING OF THE MOTHER TONGUE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND IN FRANCE. LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM FRENCH EXPERIENCE

1. The original object of the classical teaching of 'rhetoric,' from which the medieval teaching of composition in the West was derived, was, like the object of the present book, a practical one

1. One of the main objects of the present book is, as I have explained, to substitute for the ineffective teaching of the mother tongue in many English schools, and especially post-primary schools, a teaching at once more effective for the development of the personal qualities of each individual pupil and more useful for the practical purposes of life. I fully realize the forces both of inertia and of an active conservatism opposed to reform; and I have included this chapter (of which much has been taken from *The Writing of English*) in the present book because I think that a brief sketch of the paradoxical origin of the present system may, apart from its historic interest, be helpful in attaining my object. I say 'paradoxical' because the Greek and Latin systems which for so many centuries controlled the teaching of prose style in Western Europe had an eminently practical object in view, which has been lost sight of. They were derived ultimately from the Greek system of teaching rhetoric, of which the primary purpose was to enable an orator to win his case in a law-court or to convince an assembly.

2–8. Objects of the classical orator. Outline of the theories of Aristotle and Quintilian and their successors under the Roman Empire and in the Middle Ages. Abandonment of the practical object in view. The qualities and defects of the medieval teaching

object and for a definite audience; and the rules of rhetoric were developed in true scientific fashion from the study of the great speeches which preceded the creation of a conscious art.

5. For Quintilian 'the perfect orator' was not only an able speaker and writer but 'a good man.'[1] But in the development of his subject Quintilian, without explanation or sufficient reflection, abandons the practical principle. He encourages his pupils, perhaps rightly, to exuberance in the early stages, lest they should be discouraged by being checked too severely. But it is significant that in prescribing both types and subjects of composition he often loses the critical insight and common sense which distinguish so much of his work. I give some examples of these subjects, classified under three headings[2]: the *fable*, the subject of tragedies or poems; the *argumentum*, or invented story; and the *history*, which contains a relation of facts. We may discuss the credibility of a narrative, with arguments for and against; or write to praise a famous man, or to censure an immoral one, or to compare which of two characters is the better or the worse. So far so good; but we continue: the *commonplace* (*locus communis*, or general reflection) in which, without specifying persons, it is usual to declaim against vices themselves in writing about 'a blind adulterer' or 'a poor gamester.' Then comes the *thesis*, which is drawn from a comparison of things, e.g. 'whether a country or a city life is more desirable.'[3] Next follows the deliberative thesis including persuasion or dissuasion (*suasoria*), e.g. 'whether a man ought to marry,' 'whether political offices should be sought'; the discussion of 'conjectural causes,' e.g. 'why Venus among the Lacedaemonians was represented as armed,' 'why Cupid was thought to be a boy and winged, etc.'

[1] See the preface to the *Institutes* and various later references, and also Sir Richard Jebb's valuable article on Rhetoric in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th edition).

[2] *Institutes*. See Book II, chap. iv, §§ 2, 18, 20–26.

[3] I wonder how often this has figured as a subject for an 'essay' in English schools and examinations.

8. Of all the exercises practised, that which came most into vogue was the intolerable *chria*, developed from a very simple exercise in the time of Quintilian to one of inordinate length. It was what we should now call an 'essay' on the saying, or action, of a famous personage, e.g. 'Plato used to say that the branches of virtue were produced from sweat and labour,' or 'Pythagoras, when asked how long was the life of a man, after looking at himself for a moment, hid himself, thus showing that life was to be measured by a glance'; or 'Diogenes, perceiving a licentious youth, struck his teacher, adding, "Why do you teach such things?" '

The usual treatment was somewhat as follows: First the author of the saying was eulogized; then his words were paraphrased and developed, so as to bring out the meaning. Next the truth of the thought was established both positively and negatively, in the latter case by pointing out what results would follow if it were not true. Then came a comparison, an example drawn from history, confirmatory quotations from standard authors, and finally a conclusion, which often took the form of an exhortation. The *sententia* was an essay on a somewhat similar model, the saying in this case, however, being quoted without reference to its author.[1]

9. In the twelfth century, classicism was 'crowded out in the conflict of studies'

9. Carried down from school to school through the Middle Ages, with the subjects of the exercises becoming more and more remote from the lives both of teachers and taught, the study of rhetoric lapsed, and deservedly lapsed, into unimportance before the growing and living philosophy of the writers who have been called the 'scholastics' or 'schoolmen.' 'In the twelfth century,' says Dr. Rashdall,[2] 'the revived classicism . . . was simply crowded out in the "con-

[1] See A. S. Wilkins, *Roman Education*, 1905, p. 78.
[2] *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1895, vol. i, pp. 67–68.

11. By the Cambridge Statutes of 1549, the lecture on Terence was replaced by one on rhetoric, and the *trivium* was completely recast. The Statutes directed the professor to use the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Hermogenes.[1] Under Elizabeth the place previously occupied by mathematics was 'engrossed by rhetoric, and . . . although the lecturer was enjoined to deliver his discourses in the vernacular, the treatment of the subject was purely traditional,'[2] that is, dealt purely with the classics. By the Oxford Statutes of 1636 the lecturer in rhetoric was 'twice every week . . . on Mondays and Thursdays, and also at 8 o'clock in the morning, publicly to explain the rhetoric of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, or Hermogenes, and to raise such comparison among them, as out of them to reduce the precepts of the art to a single body.'[3]

12. It is to be remembered that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Latin was largely the language of the schools, and often brutally beaten into the children—a cruelty protested against by Erasmus, by Ascham, the teacher of Queen Elizabeth, and by Montaigne, who all declared that the schoolmasters were not only brutal but ignorant.(*a*)

Two of the chief English reformers—Mulcaster, in 1582, and John Brinsley the Elder, in 1612—advocated the cultivation of the mother tongue at least on equal terms with Latin. Mulcaster was a remarkable man. But he seems to have received little support in his advocacy of the mother tongue.[4]

Brinsley in his *Ludus Literarius: or the Grammar Schools* (1612) makes indeed quaint suggestions for the teaching of English on the model of Latin. Nothing could be more curious or comic than the simple Ciceronian letters which he gives

[1] *The University of Cambridge from . . . 1535 to the Accession of Charles I*, by J. Bass Mullinger, p. 111.
[2] See Mullinger, op. cit., pp. 401–403.
[3] *Oxford University Statutes*, translated by G. R. M. Ward, 1845, vol. i, p. 20.
[4] See Chapter II, § 22 and footnote.

of the English tongue by English people. 'Do but consider,' he writes, with regard to the Latin theme, 'what it is, in making a theme, that a young lad is employed about; it is to make a speech on some Latin saying, as *omnia vincit amor;* or *non licet in bello bis peccare*, etc. And here the poor lad . . . must set his invention on the rack to say something where he knows nothing' (*Thoughts*, Quick's edn., § 171). 'If boys' invention be to be quickened by such exercise,' he says a little later, 'let them make themes in English where they have facility and a command of words, and will better see what kind of thoughts they have, when put into their own language' (op. cit., § 173). And he continues (§ 189), 'it might not be amiss to make children, as soon as they are capable of it, often to tell a story of anything they know; . . . and when they can tell stories pretty well . . . to make them write them.' He suggests that they should later study the rules of composition in the first book of Cicero's *De Inventione* and that 'when they understand how to write English with due connexion, propriety, and order, and are pretty well masters of a tolerable narrative style, they may be advanced to writing of letters,' in which they should be 'taught to express their own plain easy sense.' Many of our English schools of to-day have still to learn this lesson from Locke.

15. But Locke is not only thinking of the schools. He suggests that many English gentlemen 'cannot so much as tell a story as they should, much less speak clearly and persuasively, in any business,' and he thinks this not to be so much their fault as the fault of their education; 'for,' he continues, 'I must, without partiality, do my countrymen this right, that where they apply themselves, I see none of their neighbours outgo them. They have been taught rhetoric, but yet never taught how to express themselves handsomely, with their tongues or pens in the language they are always to use; as if the names of the figures that embellished the discourses of those who understood the art

tions no doubt continued for a time to afford opportunity for exercise in Latin composition, but the traditional teaching of rhetoric became extinct, and 'Latin composition' came actually to mean translation from English into Latin, a meaning which it retains to this day in our English schools.[1] Nothing could have marked more effectually the death of the teaching of rhetoric in this country.

17, 18. The superior position in France not due to the French alone: the effect of the Ratio Studiorum *of the Italian Jesuits, of which the methods, first applied to Latin, were brought into the teaching of French by their rivals, the schools of the Oratory and of Port Royal, and, later, by Rollin. The influence of the systematic methods of the* Ratio Studiorum *and of Rollin on the teaching of French, an enduring one*

17. In France, by the end of the seventeenth century, as Locke points out, the state of affairs was very different—different in the schools, and different among men of letters. Whereas in England the masters laid undue stress on figures of speech, the French had come to lay stress on the larger constituents of style differentiated in the classical treatises: on *invention*, the discovery (and choice) of material, and on *disposition*, the orderly arrangement[2] of the material, no less than on *diction*, the choice of words.

The credit is not to be attributed to the French alone. The *Ratio et Institutio Studiorum*, of which the first edition was issued by the Jesuits in 1586, and the second in 1599, under the generalship of an Italian (Acquaviva), infused new life into the teaching of rhetoric by the variety of the

[1] In French schools the word *composition*, whether relating to Latin or any other language, retains its original sense. A piece of translation from French into any other language is called a *thème*.

[2] See the striking passage from Pascal quoted in Chapter IV, § 40, above, as well as the general remarks on this subject in the same chapter and in Chapter II, § 13.

secondary schools). 'Port Royal,' says Sainte Beuve, 'penetrated into the University through Rollin.' [1] Rollin, though an advocate of the teaching of Quintilian and full of references to him, is a faithful disciple in theory of Bacon, of Locke, of Comenius, and of Port Royal. 'To value things rather than words,' he said, in a Latin address on the establishment of free education, 'to prefer thoughts to the figures of speech which serve as the ornaments of thought; to find in sound judgment a safeguard against the dangerous sweetness of that polished style which pleases youth only because it has the lightness of youth . . . these are the impressions which we endeavour to instil from the earliest childhood, so that the mind may seem to owe only to itself what comes from a fortunate habit, and may be easily adapted to every kind of task to which it is destined in after-life.' [2] But strangely enough, in the *Traité des Études* itself, Rollin laid more stress on grace than on solidity of style. (a)

The influence of Rollin, with its virtues and its defects, lasted at least till the end of the nineteenth century. 'Our children,' M. Bréal wrote in 1873, 'do the same exercises that Rollin dictated to his own pupils.' [3]

In 1726, in the first edition of his *Traité des Études*, Rollin laid down the lines on which French should be studied, and recommended certain authors as classical.

In 1728, Buffier, a Jesuit, following suit, published a French rhetoric. The teaching methods of the Jesuits and of Rollin have been practised in France down to recent times, though not, of course, without modification.

[1] In his book *Port Royal*, 5th edition, vol. iii, p. 511. Further references to the history of the subject summarized in the foregoing paragraphs are given in *The Writing of English*, Chapter II.

[2] My text is translated from the translation of Rollin's original Latin address by H. Avocat, published in the *Œuvres complètes* of Rollin edited by Letronne (vol. xxix, p. 154). The speech is referred to in H. Lantoine's *Histoire de l'enseignement secondaire au 17e et au début du 18e siècle* (1874), pp. 245–246.

[3] *Quelques mots sur l'instruction publique en France* (3rd edition, p. 3).

who contributed largely towards the creation of modern French prose, Bossuet, Fénelon, and La Bruyère, were themselves teachers, and deeply influenced in their writing by the temperament of the teacher. The preoccupation of teaching constantly occurs in the great French writers. What, indeed, to go back in history for some years, could be more significant than the fact that Racine's greatest masterpieces, *Esther* and *Athalie*, were written for the pupils of Madame de Maintenon's school at St. Cyr?

In the corresponding period of literature in England, which includes Shakespeare and Milton, we have nothing analogous. The critical school of Dryden and of Pope, of which we have spoken above, followed that of the French. I quote the opinion of an eminent author: 'By the enhancement of form, definition, finish, and the other characteristic virtues, classicism [transmitted by France] did us immortal service. For these are the qualities which the English have not got naturally, but which they have always shown themselves ready to learn.' [1] The readiness to learn displayed in our literature has not been displayed in our secondary schools. In Milton's brief *Tractate on Education*, which might perhaps be brought forward here, we find a training in the art of writing English relegated to that distant point in a youth's education, placed by Milton at the age of twenty-one, when he is 'fraught with an universal insight into things.'

The current of literary teaching and of literature formed in France one stream. Such teaching divided from literature must become pedantic and stagnant. It did so, as we have seen, in England.

[1] Professor Oliver Elton, *The Augustan Ages*, p. 322. But is there any evidence that these characteristic qualities are possessed by the French naturally and without teaching? The contrast between French prose style of the sixteenth century and that of the seventeenth century is as striking as that between our prose style of the sixteenth century and our prose style of the end of the seventeenth century, and of the eighteenth.

being told beforehand that it is impossible, as Payot has pointed out.

In my view the only compositions in which the use of models is desirable (in matters other than planning) are formal exercises in which we are asked to follow well-recognized conventions, as in the acceptance or refusal of a formal invitation, or the use of such expressions as 'Dear Sir' at the beginning of a letter, and 'Yours faithfully,' or some approximate equivalent, at the end. In the rest of his work the young writer should say what he has to say, and what he feels he has the right to say; not what he thinks might have been said in his place by a Lamb or a Hazlitt, or perhaps, in our own days, by some writer in the eye of the public, like H. A. L. Fisher or G. M. Trevelyan, H. G. Wells or Julian Huxley, J. B. Priestley or Virginia Woolf.

21. The theory and practice of R. L. Stevenson have been brought forward in defence of the use of the model. Stevenson tells us that in his early days he played the 'sedulous ape' to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Nathaniel Hawthorne, and to other writers. 'That,' he says, 'like it or not, is the way to learn to write. . . . It was so Keats learned . . .; it was so, if we could have it out, that all men have learned.'

Yet for this sweeping statement there is no jot of evidence. The prose of Keats, that poet of genius, is, apart from his letters, trifling in amount, and in no way outstanding.[1] My own view is that it took a Stevenson to overcome the results of his imitative practice, and that it was only in his admirable romances, and other works obviously not based on models, that he completely freed himself from his self-imposed bondage.(a)

Like other English critics of whom I shall speak, Stevenson held that 'French prose is distinctly better than English,'

[1] See the Library Edition of his works, by H. Buxton Forman, with the supplementary volume entitled *Poetry and Verse by John Keats.*

the paragraph. *Ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas français.*(a) The lesson of clarity could, I feel certain, be learnt in English schools, if our teachers could be induced to think it sufficiently urgent. I disbelieve, for reasons given earlier, that there is any inherent superiority of the French over ourselves in this matter.

Of the methods used in France in the past, and still practised, which I think should be avoided, I would place first the use of the model. It has been condemned by Jules Payot in a penetrating passage which to translate would be to spoil:

'Le style d'autrui est inutilisable pour moi parce que je suis moi-même et qu'autrui n'est pas moi. Ma pensée ne peut qu'être faussée par l'imitation.' [1]

The use of the model, and especially of the literary model, leads to a lack of intellectual integrity, to a self-deception, and the deception of others, which have affected a whole section of the national life of France down to the present day. The defects which I have in mind became conspicuous in the superficially brilliant journalistic writing under the Pétain régime of 1940–44.

The second defect in French teaching to be avoided, closely allied to the first, is the choice of 'literary' subjects for school 'essays,' remote from reality, and on which any personal judgment expressed by the writers can only be unreal. To encourage a pupil to 'multiply words without knowledge,' and, moreover, as if he were addressing the

[1] *L'Apprentissage de l'Art d' Écrire* (Colin, 8th edition, 1938), p. 356. Payot first published his important views, critical and constructive, in the *Revue Universitaire* for June and July, 1897; January, February, April, and June, 1898; and April, 1899. I referred to his work in some detail in *The Writing of English* (pp. 33, 51, 62, 70, 99–100, and 105). I drew attention to his early book *L'Éducation de la Volonté* and pointed out the likeness of his ideas to those of Grégoire Girard. In his later work he develops those ideas further and claims that the teaching of composition is the most important subject in the curriculum, because, if properly taught, with the help of experimental methods, it develops the personality of each pupil. I regard Payot as the ablest French pioneer of his time in this matter.

apprenticeship in a *lycée* and could speak of the fundamental problems of secondary education from direct teaching experience. Their addresses were published in 1903 under the title *L'Éducation de la Démocratie*.[1]

The introductory address by M. Lavisse, the most striking contribution of all, combines a criticism of the education of his youth with far-reaching suggestions for what I will call a reformation rather than a reform. The title he gave to his speech was *Souvenirs d'une Éducation manquée*—'Recollections of an Education that Failed.' In it he quotes from a letter written at the close of his brilliant school and college career, a letter which reveals his sense of frustration and his disgust (it is the word which he uses himself) with the education that he had received. But more important than his criticisms of the past are his suggestions for the future, the future of education in a democratic country. What he says is the key to the rest of the book, for his colleagues shared his fundamental views. I regard the book as a whole as one of permanent value, not only for French education but for education in all democracies.

23. *Comparisons between the prose styles of Germany and of France by Schopenhauer, and between those of England and of France by Matthew Arnold and by J. A. Symonds.—Conclusion*

23. I think it relevant to quote here a comparison between German prose style and French, made by a distinguished

[1] (Paris, F. Alcan.) The authors were Ernest Lavisse, Member of the *Académie française*, and Professor of History at the University of Paris (late Fellow of the British Academy); Alfred Croiset, Member of the *Académie de Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* and Dean of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris; Ch. Seignobos *Maître-de-conférences*, and later Professor, at the University of Paris; P. Malapert, *Professeur de Philosophie* at the *Lycée Louis-le-Grand*; G. Lanson, *Chargé-de-cours*, and later Professor, at the University of Paris; J. Hadamard, *Professeur-adjoint*, and later Professor, at the University of Paris (also later, Member of the *Académie des Sciences*, and Foreign Member of the Royal Society).

Oratorians, and of Port Royal, on French secondary schools: an influence continued, as we have seen, down to the present day. The latter oversight was a surprising one in a scholar who had inspected both French and English schools. One of the chief characteristics of the French, he thinks, is 'open-ness of mind and flexibility,' while 'energy and honesty' are corresponding characteristics of the English. Arnold urges that the French have a *conscience* in intellectual matters, an *intellectual conscience*, as he sometimes calls it. And he further suggests that it was this intellectual conscience that led to the creation of the French Academy in 1635, and that the Academy has preserved the characteristic which served as its origin: it certainly was not the teaching alone. Arnold's argument is too involved to be fully discussed here.[1]

I turn to Symonds, who deals with the subject in the 'Notes on Style,' included in his two volumes of *Essays, Speculative and Suggestive*, published in 1890. 'Tardily, perhaps, yet definitely,' he writes, 'we English people have come to acknowledge our own inferiority in the *art of prose*, and the necessity we are under of learning the rules of that art from French masters.'[2] Symonds resembles Arnold in thinking that 'the intellectual and emotional qualities of nations determine their style.'[3] He believes that 'French might be described as the least endowed by nature of European languages,' yet that it has become 'the perfect instrument of prose'[4]; and, further, that 'it might almost be asserted that we are at present as far behind the French, as the Germans are behind ourselves in the art of average

[1] I will only add that Arnold uses the term 'intellectual conscience' in a sense different from that in which I have used it both earlier and in the present book. I mean it to imply that the young writer should be himself the final judge of his own work in dealing with subjects of which he has first-hand knowledge, and that he should not deceive himself by substituting the conscience of others for his own.

[2] Op. cit., vol. i, p. 309; see also vol. ii, p. 21.

[3] Op. cit., vol. i, p. 271.

[4] Op. cit., pp. 306 and 308.

CHAPTER XI

A. NOTE ON THE TEACHING OF THE MOTHER TONGUE IN THE UNITED STATES.—B. NOTE ON THE TEACHING OF THE MOTHER TONGUE IN GERMANY.—C. THE METHOD OF FATHER GRÉGOIRE GIRARD

A

Note on the Teaching of the Mother Tongue in the United States

In a Note appended to *The Writing of English* (pp. 100–104), I gave a brief account of the origin in the United States of the systematic teaching of English, beyond the limits of reading and writing. Such teaching seems to have been first given in the Nonconformist schools called 'academies' which remind one of the Warrington Academy in England at which the great scientist Priestley was a teacher of *belles-lettres*.[1] The first of such schools in the U.S.A. was the Philadelphia Academy, established in 1753 by the efforts of Benjamin Franklin, and developed later into the University of Pennsylvania. It is interesting to note that the word 'rhetoric' was used in the U.S.A. to describe the teaching of the mother tongue to which I refer (see Chapter X above).

Professor G. R. Carpenter of Columbia University

[1] See the 'Essay on Secondary Education,' by Prof. E. E. Brown, of the University of California, in the *Monographs on Education*, edited by President Murray Butler, prepared for the Paris Exhibition, 1900. Franklin, in his *Autobiography*, has left a valuable account of the systematic training which he gave himself in the art of writing. Further important statements of his views are given in his 'Sketch of an English School' and in his 'Observations relative to the Intentions of the Original Founders of the Academy in Philadelphia,' June, 1789, in which he gives full references to Locke and Rollin. These documents are printed in Prof. F. N. Thorpe's *Benjamin Franklin and the University of Pennsylvania*, Bureau of Information, Washington, 1892–3. For an account of these academies, established in considerable numbers from 1670 onwards, see also Mr. I. Parker's *Dissenting Academies in England* (1914), referred to in the valuable Historical Sketch by Dr. R. Fitzgibbon Young in the Spens Report, p. 12.

give no indication of the success of the average teacher and his average pupils. On the other hand, I had been repeatedly struck by the superiority of those Americans whom I have met on this side of the Atlantic in their power of speaking in public, of 'thinking on their feet.' And I have found that a number of Englishmen who have visited the United States during recent years share my own impressions in this matter. I see no reason to change the views which I expressed long ago on these points.

I wish now to refer to two important and recent reports by American committees which deserve the attention of our own experts, who are confronted by most, though not all, of the difficulties and problems with which their American colleagues have to deal. In the past, American teachers have had to train large numbers of pupils whose mother tongue was not English.

The first report to which I refer, published in 1940, is entitled *Language in General Education, A Report of the Committee on the Function of English in General Education for the Commission on the Secondary School Curriculum* (Progressive Education Association). The Committee, consisting of nine members, was presided over by Dr. Louis C. Zahner, Head of the English Department of Groton School and Lecturer at Harvard. I quote from the Report passages strongly reminiscent, after a lapse of thirty-five years, of the criticisms of Stanley Hall: 'Most teachers would agree to-day that the best available evidence points to the inescapable conclusion that our students do not have the control and mastery of language which is essential for fully meeting their needs, and which should therefore be expected from a general education. This lack of power over language is, in effect, a widespread phenomenon' (op. cit., p. 54). And again, the Committee say that 'the most widespread criticisms of present-day education can be summarized in the words "boys and girls do not learn how to think" ' (op. cit., p. 62).

in the University of Chicago, who, in his *Educational Psychology*,[1] says, 'the outcome of the effort that has been devoted in recent years to the teaching of English composition in the schools is disappointing'; and suggests reasons for this result.

The Harvard Report comments on the tendency of the 'mass communication' of newspapers, magazines, movies, and broadcasting, to 'cajole and lull readers, onlookers or listeners, into a permanent state of unquestioning receptivity': influences which no doubt have the same effect in this country as in the United States, and which it is one of the main objects of the method of teaching which I advocate to counteract.

The Report deals with many other important subjects. It points out that a very large percentage of pupils leave school before completing the course (under a system that, unlike our own, is not compulsory).

In dealing with the teaching of English the Report criticizes acutely a certain over-emphasis on what it describes as the 'fallacy of creative writing.' The authors believe that the views of the semanticists 'contain much that is salutary and useful for education'; that 'the semantic attitude towards grammar can be enlightening and enriching for the student and can intensify and enlarge his grasp of the principles of language'; but that 'it can also be pressed to the point of useless and confusing sophistication' (op. cit., pp. 71–72).

It is interesting to note the statement that 93 per cent. of the pupils of school age are in what are termed in America 'public schools' (i.e. those which are financed from public funds), whereas only 7 per cent. are in 'private schools' (i.e. those not financed from public funds).

I have not space here to deal in detail with the points on which I find myself in agreement, or disagreement, with the authors of these valuable Reports, in so far as they deal

[1] (Allen and Unwin, 1940) p. 238.

extraordinarily undeveloped and are not seldom put to shame by their development in persons who have had neither secondary nor academic training.'[1] Another authority, Professor H. Schott, wrote in 1905, 'in no branch of our [school] activity is the disproportion between the effort spent and the result achieved so striking as in the German essay.'[2] The textbooks on the teaching of German which I obtained in 1939 do not indicate any real progress in this matter.[3]

The contrast between the deficiencies of the German schools and the powers of organization displayed by the Germans in war was explained in a leading article in the *Morning Post*, almost certainly written by Spenser Wilkinson, then a member of its staff (and later Chichele Professor of Military History at Oxford), a competent authority both on military matters and on education.[4] The German capacity for making military plans, plans for which clear thinking and writing are essential, has been demonstrated again and again in the last hundred years. That—under stress—the British can display no less skill in planning has been proved conclusively by the marvellous achievements on the beaches

[1] *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts*, 2nd edition, 1897, vol. ii, p. 649.

[2] *Zur Praxis des deutschen Aufsatzes, besonders in den oberen Klassen.* Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum . . . und für Pädagogik: Jahrgang 1905, 2te Abteilung, p. 329.

[3] The reader who wishes to gain a general idea of education in Germany since the war of 1914–18 should consult the many contributions on the subject to that first-rate annual *The Year Book of Education*, of which publication has been suspended (I hope only suspended) since 1940. I refer especially to the illuminating articles by the late Lord Stamp on *Education and the Survival of Democracy*, by Dr. P. G. Graefe (a Nazi official) on *The Conditions and Content of the New Order of German Education*, both in the issue for 1939, and by Dr. Reinhold Schairer, then the Head of the Department of International Relations in the University of London Institute of Education, on *The Strategy of Education in the European Crisis*, in the issue of 1940.

[4] The passage referred to reads as follows: 'In Germany . . . the men who can write most clearly are not the schoolmasters, but the officers of the Army, and they have acquired this power because Moltke, the great educator of the Prussian Army, thought the power of clear writing essential and himself set the example' (*Morning Post* for 7 December, 1907). The deficiencies of British officers in this respect some forty years ago were severely commented on in the evidence given by Field-Marshal Lord Roberts and others before the Akers-Douglas Committee in 1902 (see *The Writing of English*, p. 3).

into a progressive system of gymnastics for the mind.[1] He was next led to use the teaching of the mother tongue as a means not only of intellectual, but also of moral culture, and this became for Girard its central object. The majority of the examples which he used in the teaching of grammar had some moral bearing, and he constantly asked his pupils to discuss the moral problems thus raised in the course of his teaching. The *Cours éducatif de la langue maternelle pour les écoles et les familles* (three parts, six volumes, 1845–7), which contains a systematic course of practical lessons, presents in reality a catechism of morals for children on the lines desired by Kant.[2] Girard's motto is—

Les mots pour les pensées;
Les pensées pour le cœur et la vie.

The chief objects of instruction he enumerates as follows: '*l'homme, la famille, la patrie, le genre humain, la nature, son Auteur, la Providence, J.-C. Sauveur des hommes, la vie au delà du tombeau, et la morale de l'enfance.*' He protests constantly against the passive role played by children in the teaching of his time,[3] and in the exercises on composition he was the first, so far as I am aware, to make systematic use in the teaching of the mother tongue of the precept of the medieval rhetoricians[4]: *Quis? quid? ubi? quibus auxiliis? cur? quomodo? quando?* (*Who? What? Where? By what means? Why? In what way? When?*).

In the plans of familiar letters, stories, dialogues, descriptions, and essays contained in the *Cours Éducatif, Troisième Partie*, t. ii, *Exercices de style et de composition*, Girard constantly interjects the questions *lequel? quoi? comment? pourquoi?*

[1] Girard (*De l'enseignement régulier*, p. 92) refers to a German author, Krause, as having anticipated him in the use of the mother tongue as an intellectual gymnastic training, but says that Krause used it unsystematically. The reference is, perhaps, to the philosopher Karl Christian Friedrich Krause. The point requires investigation.

[2] Kant's *Pädagogik*, ed. Willmann, p. 105.

[3] See *De l'enseignement régulier*, etc., nouvelle édition, p. 58.

[4] Ernst Laas, in *Der deutsche Aufsatz* (1868), discusses this question learnedly and at length, p. 140 and *passim*.

APPENDIX

I. INTRODUCTORY

In *The Writing of English* I devoted considerable space to subjects for school compositions, mainly taken from the French. But many books have since been published in England which afford ample material in this matter for English schools. I give below a list of such books, to which, no doubt, many others might be added, no less deserving of notice. I also give a list of books which deal especially with the history and meaning of interesting single words or phrases.

I have kept in the present Appendix only four stories written for me by pupils of ten to fourteen during my first experiments (see Chapter III, above), and an analysis of a striking passage in Kinglake's *History of the Crimean War*. I have added (1) with the kind permission of the author, the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, and of *The Times*, a reprint of an important article which led in 1942 to the inclusion of a representative of Australia in the British Cabinet, and (2) a 'Personal Message' from Sir Bernard (now Lord) Montgomery to his troops on the eve of the battle of Mareth in March, 1943.

II. FOUR COMPOSITIONS WRITTEN BY PUPILS OF 10 TO 14 DURING MY FIRST EXPERIMENTS

1. A Lazy Boy[1]

[Manchester High School for Girls.]

James Dawson's father was a farm labourer on the farm of a Mr. Woods. He was a very hard-working man, but, alas, his son did not take after him; for James was lazy and very fond of play, and he used to love to lie in bed in the mornings. His mother used to call him at seven in the mornings, for she knew he would not get up till nearly eight. James made many resolutions to get up early, but they all faded away when it was time to get up. One morning his mother called him later than usual,—

[1] See Chapter III, § 8, p. 42, above.

a Christmas present. She has decided to buy a doll that she sees in a shop window, and turning round she finds standing near her a poor schoolfellow to whom she tells her plan. The schoolfellow answers that the doll is 'nice,' but she herself would prefer a warm cape from the next shop. *A.*, instead of buying the doll for herself, buys the cape for her schoolfellow.

Ethel's Kind Act[1]

It was Christmas time, and the snow had been falling heavily for some days. The streets would have been bleak and desolate but for the brightly-lighted shops and the merry people passing to and fro. 'How I wish I had some nice things like those,' said a little girl to herself as she passed a shop full of warm coats and capes. Little Nellie did not know what it was to be really warm and happy, and Christmas was no pleasant time for her. Why should it be? 'Do you know,' said a voice by her side, 'I think it would be much jollier to have that beautiful doll.' Turning, Nellie saw a little girl about her own age standing by her side. 'No,' Nellie answered, looking at the doll, which was marked 2*s.* 6*d.*, 'I would rather have that cape,' nodding towards one that was also marked 2*s.* 6*d.* 'I shall have no presents this Christmas, but, of course, you don't need that cape like I do,' she added with a sigh, as she glanced at the warm furs which the little girl was wearing. 'Uncle Jack has given me half a crown,' the little stranger continued, 'and I am going to buy that doll; isn't she a beauty!' Nellie did not answer, but gazed into the cape window instead. Ethel was turning to go into the other shop, but something in the little girl's face stopped her. Then she thought a minute, but only for a minute. 'Should you like that cape *very* much?' she said gently. 'Shouldn't I, just?' Nellie answered. 'But, of course, it's no good wishing. I must be going, Miss,' she continued, 'father will be wanting his tea,' and she was turning to go when Ethel caught hold of her arm. 'Wait a minute,' she said; then she ran into the shop where the capes were sold. Before long she was out in the street again, with a bundle in her arms. 'There you are,' she said, thrusting

[1] The exercise took seventy minutes to work out in the rough form and forty-five to copy out.

five paces when two horses and a carriage came in sight. John saw at a moment the danger, the two horses were running away. There was nobody on the box, the coachman had evidently been thrown off. John knew that if they went three hundred yards further, they would go into the river and get drowned. In the carriage there were two ladies and a gentleman and they would get drowned too. As he was thinking that they would get drowned the carriage was about fifty yards in front, so John ran to get up to the carriage. When he was about ten yards off the carriage he gave a sudden leap and caught hold of the reins which were nearly on the ground; then he gave a sudden jerk which stopped the horses for a few moments, then he shouted to the people in the carriage to get out; barely were they out when the horse nearest John kicked him over and dashed down the street, and they were out of sight in a few minutes and were never seen again. When John came to his senses he was lying on a feather bed with his leg broken and a nurse bending over him. When he looked around he saw several other beds with several poor girls and boys in an unhappy condition like himself. When his leg was better he went away. One day he met one of the ladies and she was very beautiful. When she saw him she thanked him very much and gave him a diamond ring to remember that he had saved three lives. Several years after John and the young lady got married, and everybody who comes to the house where they live always hears of John's Brave Deed.

H. S., aet. 11.

[The teacher had much difficulty in keeping the class silent during the reading of this somewhat remarkable narrative. 'Are there deep streams in London streets?' asked M. in an audible whisper. When 'John' suddenly leapt ten yards to catch the reins, the class laughed aloud; and they laughed again at the fairy-tale ending. But the teacher took the part of H. S., while not defending him in these particulars. The earlier compositions of H. S. were so exceedingly meagre, consisting as a rule of not more than four or five lines, that he had been led to regard him as a hopeless case. In spite of its occasional inconsistencies H. S. proves that he has imagination, and is as

in bed this fine morning!' but Nellie did not hear them. 'Why,' she exclaimed, 'It can't be ten yet!' But the clock stood there, ticking as loudly as ever, as much as to say, 'It is, though.' 'You nasty thing,' thought Nellie, 'I wonder why people can't stay in bed as long as they like. I'm sure everybody would be pleased if they could, I know *I* should.' When she at length walked leisurely downstairs, everybody seemed to be busy, or doing something useful, except herself. 'This is a dreadful time to be coming down, Nellie,' said her mother. 'You must be quick and make up for lost time.' 'Must I, indeed?' thought Nellie, though aloud she said, 'What am I to do, mother?' 'After breakfast I want you to take baby out, and go to see granny, she is always so upset if a day passes without her seeing any of us.' 'O, mother!' exclaimed Nellie, 'It is such a long way, and besides——' 'You heard what I said, Nellie,' answered her mother; and Nellie knew that she must not disobey. 'It is a great shame,' muttered she to herself, as she went out, banging the door behind her. In the sitting-room baby was trying his best to get one of his fists into his mouth, but when he saw Nellie he laughed and clapped his hands with delight. Ever since baby was born he had been Nellie's special care, and she thought that he was indeed the best, the most wonderful baby in the world, while baby was never really happy or contented unless Nellie was near. This morning, however, she was cross. 'It is all your fault, baby,' she exclaimed. 'If it hadn't been for you, I should have been enjoying myself now, I did want to read that book Uncle Jack gave me,' and she flushed angrily, while baby looked at her in wondering surprise. At last they started. 'I'm not going to hurry,' said Nellie to herself, 'it is much too hot to walk quickly.' Turning round the corner she came face to face with Mabel Stuart, a school friend. 'Hullo, Nellie, where are you going to?' she asked. Nellie told her. 'What a shame to send you such a long way!' Mabel exclaimed, 'but, as I have nothing to do in particular, I will go with you.' 'Let us sit down here and rest a bit,' answered Nellie, 'I am awfully tired.' So they sat down on a grassy bank, near the river. Time passed on unnoticed by the two children (it was already early in the afternoon) who were so engrossed in each other that time, granny, and baby were all forgotten. Once only did Mabel

for, in after years, when she was tempted to do so, that day by the river seemed to stand out in her mind as a warning. The lesson was never forgotten.

E. C., aet. 13.

[E. C.'s story is perhaps a little over-pathetic. It was avowedly an attempt to meet a criticism made on an earlier effort, namely, that a single lesson must be a very severe one if it is to produce any real change in character. The class was too much carried away by the emotion of the story to be critical, and the teacher, recognizing the hard work and concentration of attention which the story had involved, abstained and said nothing. There is, however, a real danger in allowing children to be emotional, a danger both of over-stimulating their feelings and of blunting them; though the danger is less when the child expresses himself or herself naturally. Teachers should, I think, be careful not to set pathetic subjects for class-work.]

III. CRITICISM OF A PASSAGE FROM KINGLAKE'S HISTORY OF THE CRIMEAN WAR

The following passage describes the assault of the 'Great Redoubt' by the British, in the Battle of the Alma, fought on Sept. 20, 1854, by the British and French allies against the Russians. It is taken from Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea* (1st edit., 1863, vol. ii, pp. 331–3).[1]

A brigade under General Codrington (son of the victor of Navarino), together with one additional regiment, the 95th, had crossed the river Alma in some confusion, and was advancing up the slope beyond to the attack of the 'Great Redoubt' in the face of a storm of fire from the artillery and muskets of the defenders.

> The assailants were nearing the breastwork, when, after a lull of a few moments, its ordnance all thundered at once, or, at least, so nearly at the same moment, that the pathway of their blast was a broad one; and there were many who fell; but the onset of our soldiery was becoming a rush. Codrington, riding in front of the

[1] Kinglake altered several details of this passage later (see the sixth edition, published in 1875, vol. iii, p. 122). The discussion of his alterations would form the subject for an interesting lesson.

their battalions were massed. Our soldiery were up; and in a minute they flooded in over the parapet, hurrahing, jumping over, hurrahing, a joyful English crowd.

If we analyse the piece we find the following to be the main 'facts' which Kinglake wishes to describe:

(1) The troops under Codrington were advancing against the 'Great Redoubt' half hidden in smoke. (Lines 1 to 14.)

(2) The smoke began to lift and showed the British that the Russians were withdrawing their guns, for a reason unknown to them. The British shouted for joy; the smoke cleared away, and the earthwork was seen to be empty of its guns. (Lines 14 to 25.)

(3) A youth called Anstruther ran forward and planted the colour of the Royal Welsh in the parapet of the Redoubt, but was killed at once. The colour fell to the ground and was promptly lifted again by William Evans, a private of the same regiment. (Lines 26 to 37.)

(4) The English, seeing the flag in the Redoubt, were seized with the desire to come up to it. Codrington rode up to the embrasure and leapt into the breastwork, and a few of the swiftest of his infantry jumped in almost at the same moment. Norcott's riflemen ran in to the work on its east flank. The enemy's skirmishers fell back on to the main body; and the English troops swarmed over the parapet, cheering. (Lines 37 to 51.)

Now such a narration of the facts is dull; it misses half the aim of a story, for it leaves little impression on the mind of the reader, who would pass on and forget. Kinglake keeps the main facts in their order, but, never for a moment losing grip of that order, gives just the details which make the reader feel as if he were present at the scene. He appeals to our senses of sight and hearing in almost every line.

The orderly marshalling of the facts is less evident to the careless reader than the vivid details. But those details by their very vividness would, unless subordinated to the general plan, merely leave an impression on him of confused brilliancy. He would carry away less with him than from the dull plan. The dull plan is more useful than showy confused details.

It is the power of marshalling details so as to leave a truthful and a definite impression on the mind of the reader that makes a great writer of descriptive history.

Try the effect of turning the exclamations of the soldiery into 'indirect narration': 'The soldiers shouted that the enemy were limbering up, that they were carrying off their guns and were stealing away.' The effect is, of course, supremely ridiculous. It is part of the writer's business to know when he may make his characters speak instead of relating their words in the third person.

In the third section (lines 26–37), try, if you like, to improve the mode of narration. You will not find it easy. Kinglake gives you first the picture of the 'small child-like youth running forward with the colour,' and then answers your instinctive question before it is put, 'This was young Anstruther.'

'Then he was shot dead.' Just the fact—no heroics, only the physical description of his falling, covered by the flag. Evans, 'a swift-footed soldier,' ran forward and raised the flag again. You see the race for the Redoubt before you, and with hardly a word said.

The fourth section is quite straightforward and scarcely needs comment. The last two lines may be noted as extraordinarily vivid, with an appeal even stronger to the ear than the eye—'hurrahing, jumping over, hurrahing.'

Let us now read the whole through again. Our analysis has not, I think, taken the life out of the piece. After looking at the details we feel once more that Kinglake has not merely put together a patchwork of sentences; he has made us both see with his eyes and share his impression of the scene he describes.

IV. ARTICLE BY THE RT. HON. R. G. MENZIES, PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA, IN *THE TIMES* OF 21 JANUARY, 1942.[1]

AN EMPIRE CABINET?

The Question in Theory and Fact

Australia's special interests

By the Right Hon. R. G. Menzies

Can we have Empire control of an Empire war? The logical case for an Empire Cabinet of some sort is complete yet remains the most complex of problems. There may be room for difference

[1] Reprinted by permission of Mr. Menzies and of *The Times*.

is to tempt somebody to say that I am diminishing the status of my own country or accepting 'government from Downing Street.' But this, of course, is nonsense. I value the sovereignty of my own country, but I do not see why that should induce me to shut my eyes to facts.

In the practical result, then, and subject to questions of consultation to which I shall refer, the British War Cabinet is the Empire War Cabinet. Yet it contains no Dominions statesmen. The answer made to this is that, although major decisions are taken by the British War Cabinet, the Empire view is adequately obtained through the machinery of consultation. It is just as well we should be clear what this machinery is, because, though undoubtedly extensive, it is, in my opinion, limited by its own nature.

PRESENT PROCEDURE

The Secretary of State for the Dominions, who, oddly enough having regard to the importance of the Dominions, is not a member of the War Cabinet but attends its meetings by invitation, has practically daily consultations with the High Commissioners of the various Dominions in London. Those High Commissioners daily receive official papers and are able to raise questions with arguments put to the Dominions Secretary which he can then take up with the War Cabinet. In addition to this, cables are sent daily from the Dominions Office to each Dominion, some being circular cables on matters of general interest, some specifically directed to individual Dominions.

On matters of special moment it has to my knowledge been the practice for some years in Australia for the Prime Minister of Australia to communicate direct with the Prime Minister of Great Britain. The impression that this practice has arisen only in the last month or two is erroneous. On matters of urgency and importance I communicated when Prime Minister not only directly with Mr. Chamberlain and subsequently with Mr. Churchill but with other Dominions Prime Ministers and with the President of the United States. The Government of the United Kingdom has a High Commissioner established in each Dominion, and important communications and discussions frequently take place through this channel. Besides, Prime Ministers or other Ministers from time to time visit London, and

Parliament. If it contained, say, an Australian representative, he would doubtless be primarily responsible to the Australian Government, not accountable to Mr. Churchill; and this would upset the normal constitutional practice, first, by impairing the responsibility of the Cabinet of the United Kingdom to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, secondly, by impairing the normal authority of the Prime Minister of that Cabinet. I mention this point because I know it is strongly held in responsible quarters in London. But it does not appear insuperable since it is based on questions far more of form and procedure than of substance.

JAPANESE IMPACT

Pausing at this point, I have no doubt that the great majority of Australians would agree with what I have said in relation to the constitutional position; and they would go farther and say that, even if Canada and South Africa do not feel the need of representation in the British Cabinet, they do. This feeling has grown particularly since the entry of Japan into the war because we feel, I think rightly, that Australia and New Zealand are Dominions whose territorial integrity is most directly threatened. In other words, we think we have most to lose and therefore, if the choice is to be made, the greatest interests to protect.

Now assume that all this led to the appointment of an Australian representative and perhaps a New Zealand representative to the British Cabinet: would that solve the problem? The Australian would have to cable the Australian Government on all matters of importance and therefore would be subject to the limitations arising from means of communication. As the War Cabinet would inevitably sit in London he would be cut off by many thousands of miles from his Government, and probably, if experience proves anything, would fairly soon become suspected of being 'out of thought' with views in his own country.

A POWERFUL ARGUMENT

I admit at once that these considerations convince me that a permanent Australian representative on the British War Cabinet would by no means produce that perfect result at which Australians are aiming. At the same time there would be great positive advantages arising out of his presence in the British

Medenine and force the Eighth Army to withdraw, then the days of the Axis forces in North Africa were numbered.

The next day, March 6th, he attacked the Eighth Army. He should have known that the Eighth Army never withdraws; therefore his attack could only end in failure—which it did.

2. We will now show Rommel that he was right in the statement he made to his troops.

The days of the Axis forces in North Africa are indeed numbered. The Eighth Army and the Western Desert Air Force, together constituting one fighting machine, are ready to advance.

We all know what that means, and so does the enemy.

3. In the battle that is now to start, the Eighth Army

(*a*) Will destroy the enemy now facing us in the Mareth position,

(*b*) Will burst through the Gabes Gap,

(*c*) Will then drive northwards on Sfax, Sousse and finally Tunis.

4. We will not stop, or let up, till Tunis has been captured, and the enemy has either given up the struggle or been pushed into the sea.

5. The operations now about to begin will mark the close of the campaign in North Africa. Once the battle starts the eyes of the whole world will be on the Eighth Army, and millions of people will listen to the wireless every day—hoping anxiously for good news. We must not let them be anxious. Let us see that they get good news, and plenty of it, every day.

If each one of us does his duty and pulls his full weight, then nothing can stop the Eighth Army. And nothing will stop it.

6. With faith in God, and in the justice of our cause, let us go forward to victory.

7. FORWARD TO TUNIS! DRIVE THE ENEMY INTO THE SEA!

B. L. MONTGOMERY,
General, G.O.C.-in-C., Eighth Army.

March, 1943.

VI. LIST OF BOOKS SUGGESTED FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS

1. I have referred in my text only to books directly concerned with my subject, but I think it may be of use to mention others that will be of interest to the teacher.

words and phrases was initiated by Archbishop Trench's *Study of Words* (1851), now out of date. It was followed, after a long interval, by Professor E. Weekley's *Romance of Words* (Murray, first edition, 1912). Other books on the same pattern, dealing with individual words and phrases, include Mr. Eric Partridge's *Words, Words, Words* (Methuen, 1933) and *Dictionary of Clichés* (Routledge, 1944), and Mr. Ivor Brown's *Book of Words* (Cape, 1944), uniting two earlier works, and his *I give you my Word* (Cape, 1945). *The Reader over your Shoulder*, by Robert Graves and Alan Hodge (Cape, 1943), contains much information on the same subject, besides wider discussions impossible to summarize here, some of them of considerable interest. Professor J. R. Firth's *The Tongues of Men* (1937), is a short but outstanding book dealing with the general problems of language. It should be in the hands of all teachers of foreign languages as well as of teachers of English.

Supplement, 3 May, 1930, p. 193) and *Thoughts and Words* (*ibid.*, 16 August, 1930, p. 353); (vi) *An Examination of Examinations*, in conjunction with Dr. E. C. Rhodes (I.I.E.E. series,[1] Macmillan, 1st edition, 1935, 2nd edition, 1936); (vii) *The Marks of Examiners*, by Sir Philip Hartog and Dr. E. Cecil Rhodes, with a Memorandum by Professor Cyril Burt (I.I.E.E. series,[1] Macmillan, 1936); (viii) *English Composition at the School Certificate Examination, and the 'Write Anything about Something for Anybody' Theory*, contributed to *Essays on Examinations* (I.I.E.E. series,[1] Macmillan, 1936, pp. 130–141); (ix) *Secondary School Examinations and the Curricula of Secondary Schools, with Suggestions for Reform*, an Address delivered to the Higher Education Meeting at the Portsmouth Conference of the National Union of Teachers, 1937, and published by the N.U.T. (Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, W.C.1); (x) Article on *The Teaching of the Mother Tongue and the Formation of the Citizen* in *Educating for Democracy* (Macmillan, 1939, pp. 201–211); (xi) Article on *The Cultivation of the Intellectual Conscience* (*New Era*, September–October, 1939, vol. xx, pp. 234–236); (xii) *The Marking of English Essays*, by Sir Philip Hartog and others, with a Statistical Report by Professor Ebblewhite Smith (I.I.E.E. series,[1] Macmillan, 1941); (xiii) Article on *India and Palestine*, dealing with the influence of names in politics (*Sunday Times*, 4 November, 1945).[2]

(*e*). For a broad treatment of the relation of teaching in the schools to social life, I wish to refer to the international inquiry on *Moral Instruction and Training in Schools* (Longmans, 2 vols., 1908), edited with a masterly introduction by Sir Michael Sadler; to *Training in Citizenship*, by Sir Ernest Simon and Mrs. Eva Hubback (Oxford University Press, 1935); and to the Symposium on *Educating for Democracy* mentioned in End-note (*a*), above.

Chapter I

I § 7 (*a*). See a chapter by the present writer entitled *English Composition at the School Certificate Examination, and the 'Write Anything about Something for Anybody' Theory* in *Essays on Examinations*, published for the International Institute Examinations Enquiry (Macmillan, 1941, 3*s.* 6*d.*).

Chapter II

II § 5 (*a*). Mr. H. R. Fox Bourne in his *Life of John Locke* (1876) says that he accustomed himself to write down his thoughts on all kinds of subjects, 'not it would seem, with the design of giving them to the world,

[1] The letters 'I.I.E.E.' stand for 'International Institute Examinations Enquiry.'

[2] The only work on examinations in the above list relating *solely* to English is *The Marking of English Essays*; the rest relate also to other subjects.

equivalents for my younger readers, without prejudice to the poetic implications of the original.

II § 21 (*a*). A large number of pamphlets have been issued recently by political, educational, industrial, and social organizations of various kinds, of which a very useful list is given in Mr. H. C. Dent's brilliant and penetrating *Education in Transition* (p. 219) (Kegan Paul, 1944). The book is a 'study of the impact of war on English education, 1939–43'. As a typical statement from one of these pamphlets which tallies with the views I have advocated almost from the beginning of the century, I quote the following from the excellent *Plan for Education*, issued by the National Union of Teachers in 1943, p. 16 (price 1*d*.). It defines as 'the dual purpose of education, to develop the individual so that he will have the fullest use of his powers, and to give him a sense of social responsibility which will inspire him to use those powers in society for the benefit of the whole community.'

We have to bear in mind that the testing of the individual potentialities at school-age is still, as I venture to think, in its infancy, in spite of the efforts of psychologists. An immense amount of research remains to be done, and spread over many years, if our first conclusions are to be adequately tested. Indeed such work must be of a continuous kind. 'English education,' says Mr. Dent, 'is at present riddled with inert thinking' (op. cit., p. 235).

II § 22 (*a*) 1. The most ambitious and at the same time the soundest claims that I know for a place for the teaching of handicraft, not only in what have been called 'technical schools' but in the teaching of every boy and girl in every school, were made by Dr. Ballard in a pamphlet, *The Cultural Value of Handicraft*, published in 1929 by the Dryad Press, Leicester, in their leaflet No. 1. It is now unfortunately out of print, but I am allowed to quote the following passages from it. I wish I could quote more.

(i) Handicraft is taught in our schools, not because it is useful to some pupils, but because it is useful to all pupils. It forms part—an essential part—of a liberal education. It provides a culture of its own, which no other pursuit can supply. The tendency of the past has been to regard literary culture as the only true type of culture. It was with reluctance that our schools recognized the claims of any other.

(ii) Of all the subjects in the curriculum handicraft is the most fundamental. It strikes deepest into the primary instincts and impulses of mankind, it reaches furthest back towards the beginnings of human civilization. It was the first instrument of culture. The real education of the race started when our remote ancestors began to subdue their surroundings to secure food and shelter; began in fact to use their hands for the conquest of nature. To them the hand was the chief, if not the

matter has been given by Dr. R. Fitzgibbon Young in his original and outstanding *Historical Sketch of the Traditional Curriculum in Secondary Schools*, from the Middle Ages down to the present day, contributed to the Spens Report (pp. 1–86). I would refer the reader especially to § 32 of the *Sketch*, which includes important quotations from the Report of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education of 1895, of which Lord Bryce was chairman, and Sir Michael Sadler one of the most influential members. Morant succeeded in defeating the recommendations of the Bryce Commission relating to technical education. The story is a long and painful one, told very ably by Dr. Young. By the triumph of Morant's views over those of Sadler the progress of scientific and technical education in the schools of this country was delayed for forty years.[1]

Chapter III

III § 1 (*a*) 1. F. Max Müller, *The Science of Thought* (Longmans, 1887; see p. 549 and *passim*). I was unaware, when I wrote this, of S. Butler's much more elaborate criticism of Max Müller in the same sense, in his address on *Thought and Language*, first delivered in 1890, modified and reprinted in *Selected Essays* (Cape, 1927, pp. 219–256; and Shrewsbury edition, Cape, 1925, vol. xix, pp. 59–90). Butler makes important, though fragmentary, references to Sir William Hamilton's *Lectures on Logic* (2 vols., 1st edition, 1860, edited by Professors Mansel and Veitch, 3rd edition, 1874), published posthumously. Hamilton died in 1856. Butler's criticism of him is especially unsatisfactory because he does not draw attention to Hamilton's self-contradictions, only fully apparent when the passages in his two volumes on this subject are read as a whole.

2. John Stuart Mill had already in 1865, in chapter xvii of his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*,[2] drawn attention with approval to the same passages as Butler. Both men had quoted from Lecture VIII; both had missed the later passage in Lecture XXXI of the *Lectures on Logic* quoted below, which expresses Hamilton's final opinion on this matter. It reads as follows:

'The first and greatest difficulty in the question is thus:—It is necessary to think in order to invent a language, and the invention of a language is necessary in order to think: for we cannot think without notions, and notions are only fixed by words. This can only be solved, as I have said, by the natural attraction between thought and speech,—by their secret

[1] Besides the *Sketch*, Dr. Young also made another important contribution to the Spens Report, a *Note on the Development of the Conception of General Liberal Education* from the fifth century to the present day (op. cit., pp. 403–414).

[2] (Longmans, 1st edition, 1865, pp. 323–324, 4th edition, 1872, pp. 395–396). It should be added that Butler (op. cit., p. 254) quotes with praise a passage on the topic from the Duke of Argyll, of which I have been unable to trace the original.

4. Heinrich Gomperz in his valuable *Weltanschauungslehre* (vol. ii, part i, 1908, pp. 56–66), in which he contrasts Schopenhauer with Max Müller, whom he treats with contempt, excels Schopenhauer in expressing the same general views, though he differs from him slightly. 'Every man,' he says, 'who is not merely giving a meaning to a given set of words, but who seeks expression for a particular thought, realizes that thoughts may be present in his mind before they are "formulated," and indeed knows that a thought not originated in this way scarcely deserves to be called a thought.' He contrasts the *lightning* formation of a thought, when it comes into the mind in a finished form of expression, with the gradual transformation of thought into words. Thoughts not yet developed into words he calls 'embryonic' thoughts (*embryonale Gedanken*).[1] He distinguishes further between three categories of thoughts, *undetermined thoughts*, *potentially determined thoughts*, and *actually determined thoughts*. And he points out (with a precise reference in each case) that similar views have been put forward or suggested in the writings of a number of philosophers from the era of antiquity, through the Middle Ages, and down to modern times. I name only some of them: Plato, Aristotle, Boethius, Porphyry, Leibniz, and Herbart. He quotes Leibniz as saying that experience has shown him that he has never recognized a truth without using in his mind words, *or other signs* [the italics are mine], and gives a reference to the *Philosophische Schriften* (ed. Gerhardt, *Dialogus*, in vol. vii, p. 191).

5. Finally we must mention Helmholtz, the great mathematician and physicist, who, in 1891, described the way in which his most important new thoughts had come to him; that after previous investigation of a problem in all directions, happy ideas came unexpectedly without effort like an inspiration; they came particularly readily during the slow ascent of wooded hills on a sunny day.[2]

The evidence is conclusive. And what is true of these illustrious men is true, in greater or lesser measure, of us all. Max Müller has not a leg to stand on.

6. Reference should also be made to the views of Hughlings Jackson and Sir Henry Head, alluded to in Chapter IV, § 9, and the End-notes relating to that section.

(*b*). When I wrote this I had in mind the experiences of the period following the Boer War of 1899–1902.

[1] A chemist, instead of using the 'lightning' metaphor, might have compared the process to the sudden crystallizing out of a supersaturated solution when a tiny fragment of a crystal of the substance in solution is dropped into it.

[2] Quoted by Graham Wallas in his *Art of Thought* (Cape, 1926), pp. 79–80. Wallas also tells us that an able and recent French writer, Rémy de Goncourt, said that his conceptions rose into the field of consciousness like a flash of lightning; and that J. Varendonck, in his *Psychology of Day Dreams* (Allen & Unwin, 1921) made similar statements.

Thought and of the Science of Symbolism.'[1] The authors claim that their book has opened a new avenue of approach to traditional problems, and in their analysis of their first chapter, 'Thoughts, Words and Things,' they give as one item 'the failure of Semantics.' This condemnation of the use of the term 'semantics' to signify the science of the meaning of words has not been generally accepted by other writers on this subject.

2. Some idea of the different views attached to the word 'meaning' itself may be gained from the fact that in Chapter IV of *The Meaning of Meaning* the authors give 'a representative list of the main definitions which reputable students of meaning have favoured' comprising no less than sixteen definitions, divided into three groups. Even if I had a competence which I cannot claim to discuss these different definitions, the scope of the present book would not have permitted of such discussion; and for any minute treatment a study of the different works on the subject by Ogden and Richards, as well as of those of other authors, would be necessary. A bibliography appended to a work by Professor H. Delacroix, *Le Langage et la Pensée*, published in 1924, already contains several hundred items relating to this and allied subjects.

3. Among books referring to general problems of language, including semantics, I may mention the following: (i) A. Meillet's *Linguistique historique et Linguistique générale* (1921); (ii) and (iii) E. Cassirer's *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, vols. i–iii (1923–29), with a separate index volume; and a condensation of the German text in *An Essay on Man* (Yale Univ. Press and Oxf. Univ. Press, 1944), an outstanding work, published shortly before the author's death; (iv) H. Gomperz's *Weltanschauungslehre*, discussed in End-note III § 1 (*a*), para. 4; (v) *Race, Language and Culture*, by Professor F. Boas (Macmillan, 1940), with an interesting chapter on 'Stylistic Aspects of Primitive Literature,'

[1] Six editions of this book have been published, the first in 1923, the sixth in 1944.

Mr. C. K. Ogden has also published, *inter alia*, on this and allied subjects, *The ABC of Psychology* (1st edition, 1929, 4th edition, 1944, Penguin series), of which chapters ix, xi, xiii, and xvii are of special value for the student of semantics. I understand from Mr. Ogden that the references to 'meaning' in this book are based on his *Bentham's Theory of Fictions* (1934) and his *Basic English and Grammatical Reform* (Orthological Institute, 1937).

Dr. I. A. Richards has published, *inter alia*, on this and allied subjects, *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (1st edition, 1925, 5th edition, 1934); *Practical Criticism* (1st edition, 1929, 3rd edition, 1935); *Interpretation in Teaching* (1938); *Mencius on the Mind* (1932).

All the above-named books by Messrs. Ogden and Richards have been published by Kegan Paul, except where it is otherwise indicated.

Dr. Richards' *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936) was published by the Oxford University Press. He also published an important article on 'The English Language and Citizenship' in the *Journal of Education* for January, 1939.

Stanley (later Earl) Baldwin said, 'self-determination is another rhetorical term that may some day lead us into a bloody war.'[1] A book on the subject has recently been issued by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, *National Self-Determination*, by Alfred Cobban (Oxford University Press, 1945).

Since the above paragraph was written the term 'self-determination' may have entered on a new career through its insertion, in a new context of words and environment of circumstance, in the Charter of the United Nations signed at San Francisco in June, 1945. It occurs in the following passage of Article I of Chapter I of the Charter:

'The purposes of the United Nations are: . . . (2) To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures for the preservation of peace.'

If the purposes of the Charter of San Francisco are to be fully carried out it will be necessary as a part of the re-education of Germany to put out of action those Nazi phrases which were at once a symptom of a national disease and a means for its propagation. They must be replaced by words and phrases significant of healthier and more humane ideas.

In an article on *India and Palestine*, published in the *Sunday Times* of 4 November, 1945, I drew attention to the following pregnant sentence in the Introduction to Bishop Berkeley's *The Principles of Human Knowledge* (of 1710):

'When language is once grown familiar, the hearing of the sounds or sight of the characters is oft immediately attended with those passions which at first were wont to be produced by the intervention of ideas that are now quite omitted.'

And I applied this principle to the grave menace to peace both in India and in Palestine arising from this psychological weakness.

(*c*). The quotation is from the *Plea for an Age Movement*, by Professor R. B. Perry (Vanguard Press, New York, 1942). The addresses embodied in his book were given in 1941.

IV § 4 (*a*). Butler was anticipated in this remark by William Hazlitt (1778–1830), who said, 'We never do anything well until we cease to think about the manner of doing it' (*Paragraphs on Prejudice*, in the *Complete Works*, edited by P. P. Howe, vol. xx, p. 326). Butler was also anticipated to some extent, as he himself points out, by Professor Oswald Hering, in a lecture in Vienna in 1870, 'On memory as a universal function of matter.' See Butler's *Unconscious Memory* (1st edition, 1888, later edition, with an introduction by Marcus Hartog, 1910).

IV § 8 (*a*). Richards, abandoning the definition of the *Oxford English*

[1] See his *On England* (Camb. Univ. Press, 1926), p. 106.

'Words are things. . . . It is not the logical context of the word, but the whole mesh of its conditions including the character, circumstances and attitude of the speaker, that is its true strength' (op. cit., pp. 108–109); and

'Besides the artist two things are to be considered in every art, the instrument and the audience. . . . From both of these the artist, if he would find freedom for all the exercise of his powers, must sit decently aloof' (op. cit., p. 4).

The first passage harmonizes with the views of the writers from whom I have quoted. The second shows that Raleigh in his early days considered the audience as a hindrance, and not as a stimulus, to expression. His own later work was much stronger. Indeed he condemned his book in my hearing, and with a smile, as being 'too stylistic.'

(*b*). Bréal's tract was written as a review of *La Vie des Mots*, by A. Darmesteter, to whom I have referred in Chapter III, § 13, above. In it Bréal states that he was himself the 'god-father' of the word *sémantique*. He thinks that Darmesteter and Hermann Paul (in his *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*) both considered words too much in isolation; and criticizes Darmesteter for having over-emphasized the metaphor of 'life' in speaking of words, yet Bréal himself does not hesitate to speak of *la mort matérielle d'une désinence* (in plainer language, the disappearance of a grammatical ending). Darmesteter, who held the chair of the History of the French Language at the Sorbonne, would certainly have agreed with Bréal that 'semantics belongs essentially to history,' a fact overlooked by some modern writers on this subject.[1] And Bréal regards Darmesteter's book as a trustworthy and convenient guide (*un guide sûr et commode*) to semantics.

The use by Darmesteter of the metaphor '*vie des mots*' has been criticized by others, notably Gaston Paris and Antoine Thomas. But they give to the book as a whole the greatest praise. Paris is full of admiration for the book. 'L'auteur, fidèle à cet esprit philosophique qui ajoute à tous ses ouvrages une haute valeur, ne se perd pas dans l'amusement que lui donnent, comme à nous, toutes ces démonstrations.'[2] Antoine Thomas, though he agrees with Bréal's criticism of Darmesteter's one metaphor, writes in his *Essais de philologie française* (p. 177): 'Il ne m'en coûte pas de sacrifier l'appareil biologique du livre de Darmesteter, car, débarrassé de cet oripeau urgent et tapageur, son livre conserve toute sa valeur intrinsèque, que M. Bréal lui-même n'a

[1] See *Traité de la formation de la langue*, written by Darmesteter as an Introduction to the Hatzfeld-Darmesteter *Dictionnaire Général de la Langue Française*, published after his death in 1888.

[2] Paris' review was first published in the *Journal des Savants* for 1887. It was reproduced in 1909 in *Mélanges linguistiques*, edited by Mario Roques, from which the passage quoted in the text is taken (see especially pp. 294–299).

IV § 19 (*a*). Richards uses a nomenclature of his own in dealing with metaphors, a subject which he discusses at considerable length in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), and *Interpretation in Teaching* (1938). His theories are too complex for analysis in this place. He has rendered a notable service in emphasizing, like Darmesteter, the differences of significance of the same metaphorical expressions in the minds of different listeners and readers.

IV § 22 (*a*). I have rendered in the passage quoted the French *moral* by the English 'mental.' It seems, oddly enough, the right translation in this context.

The whole question of translation, especially from French into English, is full of difficulties. The best method of solving them that I know has been outlined by Mr. Desmond MacCarthy in his Dedication of a translation of a book from the French of Jules Romains, which the translators, Mr. MacCarthy and Sir Sydney Waterlow, have called *Death of a Nobody*. If M. Romains had been born an Englishman, says Mr. MacCarthy, 'perhaps he would have written the same kind of books, but he would have written them differently. He would have left some things out and put others in. . . . A translator cannot attempt to write the book his author would have written in another tongue. He must follow, if not step by step, yet pretty closely, the path of the original, only substituting idioms and *changing metaphors* [the italics are mine] when it is beyond his power to suggest the grace as well as the meaning of the original.'

Jean Le Clerc said almost the same thing of his translation into French of Locke's Abstract of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, which Le Clerc published in 1688 (see Lord King's *Life and Letters of John Locke* (Bohn edition, 1858, p. 399). The systematic book on *Translation from French*, by Professor R. L. G. Ritchie and J. M. Moore (Camb. Univ. Press, 1918), is full of useful and interesting suggestions on this intricate subject. I have myself omitted two or three words from the translation from Schopenhauer in Chapter X, § 23, which add nothing to the author's meaning, and would have spoilt the English rendering.

IV § 27 (*a*). Since the time of the Greeks a vast amount has been written in many languages on rhythm in prose and in verse, far too vast to be discussed here. I mention below one little-known French work of a general character dealing with rhythm in prose as well as in verse, together with others dealing specifically with English prose: *La Métrique naturelle du Langage*, by Paul Pierson (F. Vieweg, 1884); *A History of English Prose Rhythm*, by Professor George Saintsbury (Macmillan, 1912); *English Prose Numbers*, by Professor Oliver Elton, and *Rhythm in English Verse, Prose, and Speech*, by Dr. D. S. MacColl, in *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, vols. iv and v (Oxford University

is a spoken page. Very often the inexperienced writer is betrayed into a form of sham that may arise from modesty. It seems so bold and egotistic to say "*I* think," and the result is the worse egotism of the leader-writer of a newspaper. I do not mean that all leader-writers of all newspapers are egotistic, but the anonymous "we" and even the impersonal statement often assume an air of pompous infallibility on which the much-abused "I" would not dare to venture.

'After all, 'tis always some honest John Smith (like you or me) that is really speaking. I agree that that egotist John must be kept in his place; if he is thrust too far into the foregound John's personality will interfere with John's message. But, I ask you, is it not a far worse fault to hide John altogether beneath a cloud of anonymity, to disguise his voice (your voice or mine, you know), and pretend that it is Wisdom herself who is speaking? We are so familiar with that terribly wise make-believe of the essay that many of us, teachers and students alike, hardly realize that it *is* a make-believe and a sham. But if we try hard enough I think we may still find the golden mean between self-assertion and self-disguise.'

Chapter X

X § 12 (*a*). For statements about the cruelty and ignorance of schoolmasters of their time, see the following: (1) W. H. Woodward's *Desiderius Erasmus* (Camb. Univ. Press, 1904), pp. 98–100, and the quotations on pp. 200–205 from Erasmus's tract *De Pueris* of 1529. (2) Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570), reprinted and edited by J. E. B. Mayor (Bell, 1863), pp. xiv–xvii. (3) The *Essais* of Montaigne, who makes a number of important references to the subject in Book I, chap. xxv, 'on the education of children' (published in 1580), and speaks of the floors of the class-rooms being strewn, not with flowers, but with 'blood-stained bits of osier.' [Florio's translation, though admirable, is not literal.]

X § 16 (*a*). See the *Spectator* for 15 September, 1712. The context shows that Steele had in mind here the art of speaking; but in the teaching of 'rhetoric' speaking and writing were closely associated. Moreover the modern reader must be on his guard against thinking that even for Locke rhetoric meant only the abuse of figurative language, as it so often does in our English speech of the present day. As Locke's text shows, it included 'order and clearness,' as well as the use (and abuse) of figures of speech. It is to be noted that in the educational system of the United States the word 'rhetoric' has kept the significance which it had in classical and medieval times, and might be rendered as 'the teaching of English composition.'

The excellent article on Rhetoric by Sir Richard Jebb in the 9th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* gives the best account which

Life of R. L. Stevenson, vol. i, it is referred to at length in the chapter headed 'Life at Five-and-Twenty—1873–76.'

Stevenson named among the writers whom he had 'imitated' a few French authors, but the possibility of 'imitating' the style of a foreign author is too complex to be discussed here. How the style of a Cicero could be 'aped' in English I cannot imagine.

X § 22 (*a*). '*Ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas français*' has become so much a part of the French language that it is hardly regarded as a quotation. It is taken from Rivarol's *De l'universalité de la langue française*, 1784, to which the Berlin Academy awarded a prize in the same year. (See the Firmin-Didot *édition de luxe* of this work (1934), p. 72.)

(*b*). The article and translation referred to were written for, and published by, the Board of Education (Office of Special Enquiries and Reports) in vol. 24 of the *Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, dealing with Secondary and University Education in France (H.M. Stationery Office, 1911, pp. 1–244). The volume includes *inter alia* a short but important introduction, unsigned, but undoubtedly by Sir Michael Sadler; a 'Report on an Inquiry into the Method of Teaching the Mother-Tongue in France,' by Arthur H. Hope, which deals with elementary as well as with secondary classes; and an article on 'The Secondary Education of Girls in France,' by J. Oliphant. To the same volume (pp. 245–393) Dr. Cloudesley Brereton contributed 'A Comparison between French and English Secondary Schools,' with a lively section on the lessons to be learnt by England from France in the teaching of the mother tongue (op. cit., pp. 292–298).[1]

(*c*) 1. Although, as I have said, I regard Payot as the ablest pioneer in the introduction of what he calls 'active methods' in the teaching of composition, Lanson by his masterly *Histoire de la Littérature Française*, and by his teaching both at the Sorbonne and at the École Normale Supérieure, of which he became the Director, influenced a whole generation of French teachers in universities and secondary schools, and their pupils. It is noteworthy that he regarded the reading and explanation of French texts as the fundamental exercises in the French classes. To realize its influence on the teachers of composition, one must study the explanation of his methods in his contribution to the *Éducation de la Démocratie*.[2] They are not exercises in the use of a 'model.'

2. I give below a condensed statement of what Lanson says. In the early stages the teacher should give the least possible amount of 'literary history.' The text itself, its relation to the author, to the persons

[1] Vol. 18 of the *Special Reports* (1907) deals with the Education and Training of the French Primary School Teacher, and contains a translation of the 'Scheme of Work and Syllabus of Instruction in Higher Primary Schools for Boys' by the present writer.

[2] Op. cit., pp. 176–188, and especially pp. 178–184.

actual examples of composition by French pupils in a *lycée* for boys (in a *classe de rhétorique*[1]), and in a *lycée* for girls, and compositions written by candidates at some examinations, including plans of many of the compositions. The subjects are mostly historical or literary, not of the kind that Lanson himself recommended later. The criticisms of detail are interesting.

4. I received in 1939 from my friend M. G. Gastinel (formerly Inspecteur général de l'Instruction publique) the following more recent books on the subject:

La composition française et l'éducation de la pensée (Hachette, 1934), by A. Lucquin, an inspector of primary schools, intended for such schools, which is useful. The author has been influenced by English and American psychologists (Bain, Herbert Spencer, and William James), and by later French writers, like Delacroix, Brunot, and Bally. A series of books by Brunot and Bony, by F. Launay, and by L. Bocquet and L. Perrotin, all illustrated (and published by A. Colin), give an idea of the methods used just before the war in French primary schools at an early stage, but they hardly come within the scope of the present work. The numerous examples of exercises given in them may, however, be suggestive.

5. Education as a whole in France is in a state of flux. In 1937–38 new sets of *Programmes* for secondary and for higher primary education were issued, but had not been brought into action when the war broke out in 1939. They were entirely replaced by fresh *Programmes* under the Pétain régime, and these again have been replaced by new *Programmes* issued in 1944 after the liberation of France, and published in the weekly *Bulletin Officiel du Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale* (No. 1, 5 October, 1944). I have not the space to deal here with the new regulations relating to the teaching of French composition, which differ in some respects markedly from their predecessors.

X § 22 (*d*). The events of the war illustrate the battle in French education to which I refer, and in nothing more clearly than in the changes in educational policy which took place during the Pétain régime (1940–44), and the fresh revolution in education which followed the liberation of France in the latter year. The reactionary policy of the Pétain régime in teaching and especially in the training in self-expression was revealed as in a flash by a statement made in 1942 by M. Abel Bonnard, who became Minister of Education in 1943—'*il faut jeter Descartes par la fenêtre.*' The doctrine of the *Discours de la Méthode*, held up to the admiration of many generations of French youth, '*je pense, donc je suis*,' was to be forbidden in the schools of a Nazified France. Sweeping changes, equally anti-intellectual and anti-democratic in

[1] Now called *première*.

'*Exercices écrits de composition française; narrations, portraits, lettres, discours, dialogues, petits sujets littéraires ou moraux.*'

I have to acknowledge the great assistance given to me by M. Jacques Voisine, then Professor at the Institut Français in London, in obtaining the latest information available with regard to Higher Primary and Secondary Education in France.

Finally, I must refer my readers to a series of admirable articles published in the *New Era* for December, 1945 (vol. xxvi, pp. 227–246), on the introduction of the democratic spirit into French education, by members of the *Groupe français d'Éducation nouvelle*. The articles are signed by the president, M. Paul Langevin, Member of the Institute and Professor at the Collège de France; M. Henri Wallon, Professor at the Collège de France; M. Paul Maucorps, M. A. Weiler, and Madame F. Séclet-Riou. They define the new movement animating post-war education in France.

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